

# Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 21-22, 2015

Reference No.: 2.2c.(3)  
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA  
Chief Financial Officer

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Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING  
06-Ker-58, PM R143.5/R143.9, 08-SBd-58, PM 0.0/12.9  
RESOLUTION E-15-58**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The California Department of Transportation recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-15-58.

## **ISSUE:**

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:

- State Route 58 (SR 58) and United States Route 395 (U.S. 395) in San Bernardino and Kern Counties. Widen and realign a portion of SR 58 and build new interchange at U.S. 395 in and near the town of Kramer Junction. (PPNO 0215C)

This project in Kern County will realign and widen SR 58, and construct a railroad grade separation and an interchange at the SR 58/U.S. 395 junction. The project is programmed in the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program. The total estimated cost is \$194,838,000 for capital and support. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2017-18. The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope programmed by the Commission in the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources that may be impacted by the project include: aesthetics, community impacts, noise, geology and soils, water quality, biological resources, and traffic.

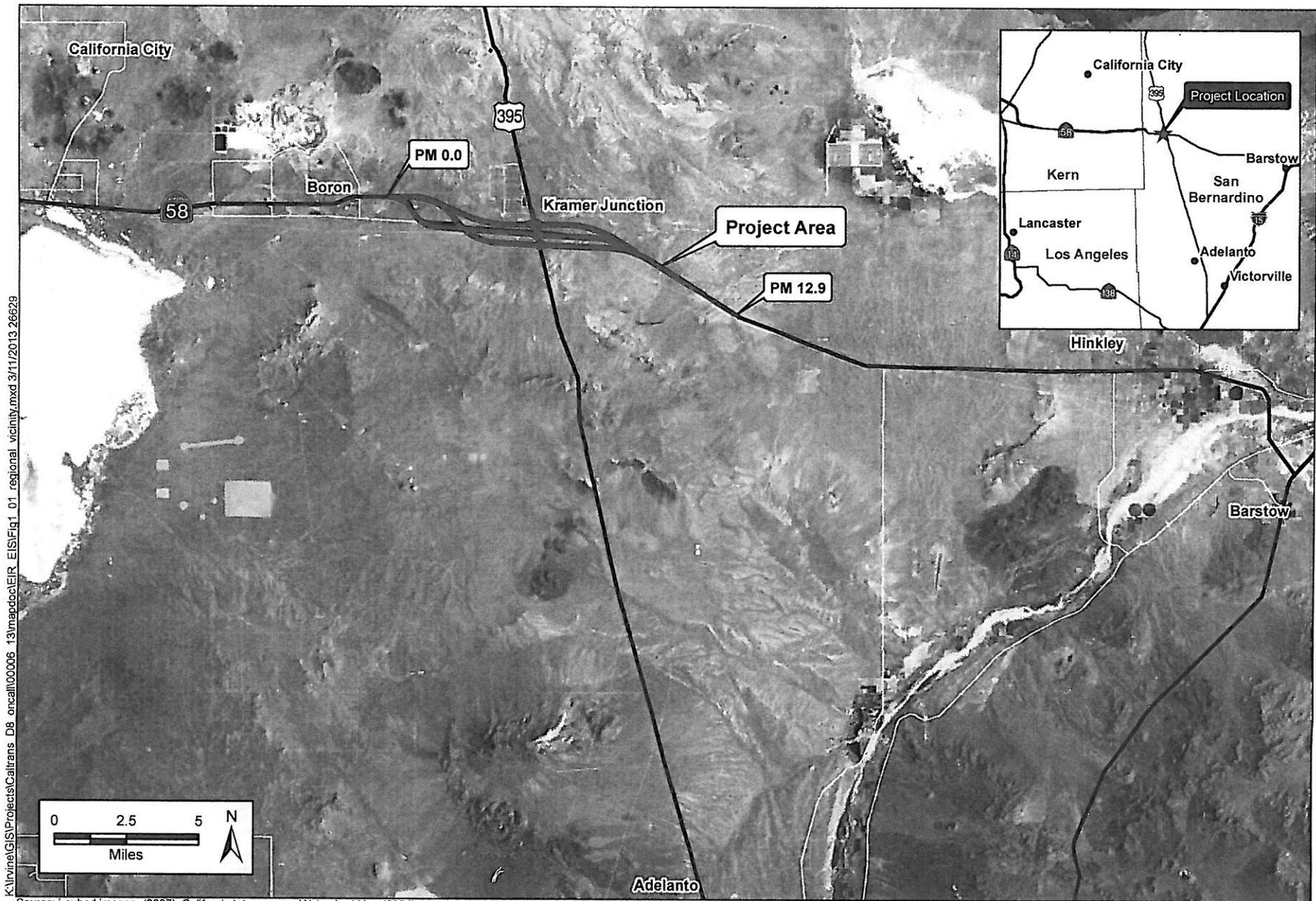
Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

## **CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

### **Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding 06-Ker-58, PM R143.5/R143.9, 08-SBd-58, PM 0.0/12.9 Resolution E-15-58**

- 1.1 WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
- State Route 58 (SR 58) and United States Route 395 (U.S. 395) in San Bernardino and Kern Counties. Widen and realign a portion of SR 58 and build new interchange at U.S. 395 in and near the town of Kramer Junction. (PPNO 0215C)
- 1.2 WHEREAS**, the Department 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, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report.
- 1.4 WHEREAS**, the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.5 WHEREAS**, Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.
- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.



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Source: i-cubed imagery (2007), California Inter-agency Watershed Map (2004)

State Route 58 Kramer Junction Expressway Project  
 06-Ker-58 PM R143.5/R143.9  
 08-SBd-58 PM R0.0/R12.9  
 EA 08-34770  
 Project Number 0800000616

**Figure 1.1**  
**Regional Vicinity Map**  
**State Route 58 Kramer Junction Expressway Project**

## FINDINGS

### CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR THE STATE ROUTE 58 (SR-58) KRAMER JUNCTION EXPRESSWAY PROJECT IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). 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.

#### **Community Cohesion/Character**

##### *Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Due to the increased efficiency of traffic operations associated with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative, impacts to businesses are likely because motorists/truckers/regional travelers would be less likely to stop at Kramer Junction. Additionally, Alternative 1A would result in the displacement of an airplane hangar/storage facility and runway associated with a Kramer Junction business. Alternative 1A would also entail the construction of a large, urbanizing overpass at Kramer Junction that would affect community character.

##### *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:*

Direct vehicle access from northbound and southbound US-395 will be ensured during project operation. In addition, a Construction Management Plan and a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) will be prepared for the project and include coordination efforts that will inform the community about project activities, maintain access to and from the project area during construction, minimize construction-period traffic, and control glare, dust, and noise. Caltrans will also coordinate with the community and County regarding

the possibility of placing a Welcome sign at both ends of the proposed expressway with brief information encouraging visitors to visit services offered at Kramer Junction.

## **Relocations**

### *Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would require the displacement of a privately-owned water cistern as well as an airplane hangar/storage facility and associated runway.

### *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:*

A permanent replacement site will be provided or the existing site will be reconfigured to accommodate the airplane hangar and runway. Adequate relocation resources will be made available for displaced uses.

## **Utilities and Service Systems**

### *Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would require the relocation of various above- and underground utilities. However, once project construction is complete and the project is operational, there would be no change to the utility service in the area.

### *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:*

Standard Caltrans utility relocation procedures would be followed in order to reduce the effects of any utility service disruptions.

## **Traffic**

### *Adverse Environmental Effects:*

During construction, the existing SR-58 facility would remain open to traffic, but temporary traffic delays are expected.

*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:*

Caltrans will prepare a TMP, which is standard on Caltrans projects, to ensure efficient movement of local and regional traffic during construction. The TMP will detail any projected temporary street closures or expected traffic delays due to construction vehicles using the roadways. The TMP and construction plans will be provided to community agencies prior to project commencement.

**Visual/Aesthetics**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would involve the construction and operation of an elevated dual crossing structure over US-395. The dual structure would be 151 feet in length and 30 feet in height, with a minimum vertical clearance of 20 feet above US-395. The structure would reduce the quality of the existing visual environment as predominantly natural landscapes are replaced with anthropogenic elements.

*Findings:*

Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

*Statement of Facts:*

Caltrans will ensure that all lighting is directed away from homes and habitats to minimize glare impacts. Context Sensitive Solution approaches will be implemented, including the visual integration of elements of the project with the surrounding natural landscape features, earth-tone pigmentation of structures, and native plantings. Such efforts will reduce the visual impact of the Preferred Alternative, but it would remain a significant impact following implementation of mitigation strategies.

**Cultural Resources**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Of the nine archaeological sites identified within the vicinity of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A), seven were evaluated and determined not eligible. The historic component of an eighth site was evaluated and determined not eligible, and the prehistoric component of this site was assumed eligible for the sake of this undertaking with a finding of “no adverse effect.” One additional site was also assumed eligible for the sake of this undertaking with a finding of “no adverse effect.” Although not expected,

there is potential for impacts related to the discovery of previously unknown cultural resources or human remains during the construction period.

*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:*

In order to avoid impacts to cultural resources sites in the vicinity of the project, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) will be delineated around a portion of the subject sites, as described in the ESA Action Plan in the Finding of Effect. The ESA will be delineated on the final plans, which will be reviewed by a qualified archaeologist. In addition to the delineation of the ESA, standard actions to reduce the potential for impacts related to the discovery of previously unknown cultural resources or human remains during construction will be implemented.

**Hydrology and Floodplains**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

The project area is not located in a mapped flood hazard area as defined by FEMA, but it is located in a zone that has been identified as having a possible but undetermined flood hazard.

*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:*

Measures to ensure proper hydrological function will be implemented, including design features to ensure that stormwater flows do not overtop the roadway section and culvert design to concentrate stormwater flows into appropriate inlets.

**Water Quality**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would increase the amount of impervious surface in the area, which would increase stormwater runoff. Increases in stormwater runoff volume could accelerate soil erosion and increase the transport of pollutants to waterways.

*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:*

Consistent with Caltrans' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and the Construction General Permit, BMPs will be incorporated into the proposed project to reduce the discharge of pollutants during construction and operation to the maximum extent practicable. The project contractor will be responsible for preparing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that will include soil stabilization measures during and post construction.

**Geology and Soils**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Because of the sandy nature of soils in the vicinity of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A), onsite soils are easily erodible, and erosion could occur during construction. Development of the roadway would cause groundbreaking and vegetation removal during construction. As a result, soil could be exposed to rain and wind, potentially causing accelerated erosion and deposition from the project site.

*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:*

Earthwork in the project area would be performed in accordance with Section 19, Earthwork, of Caltrans' 2010 Standard Specifications.

**Paleontology**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would traverse areas of Pleistocene older alluvium overlain by a thin sedimentary veneer of Holocene alluvium. The surface and subsurface Pleistocene sediments were derived from the ancestral Mojave River and have the potential to contain scientifically important nonrenewable paleontological resources. Although no fossils were observed during field reconnaissance conducted in April 2009, this does not preclude their unearthing as a result of project construction.

*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:*

A Paleontological Mitigation Plan would be required and would be completed during final project design in order to identify the scientifically sensitive areas that would be affected by construction activities and the measures that will be implemented in the event of paleontological discoveries. The Plan will include, at a minimum, the following elements: paleontological awareness training for earthmoving personnel, a signed repository agreement with an appropriate repository, monitoring by a Principal Paleontologist of Pleistocene older alluvium, implementation of field and laboratory methods that meet the curation requirements of the appropriate repository, and preparation of a Paleontological Monitoring Report.

**Hazardous Waste/Materials**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Investigations of the soil in the vicinity of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) for evidence of petroleum, VOCs, metals, PCBs, ADL, and other hazardous materials did not suggest a high likelihood of encountering such materials during the construction period. However, there is the possibility that hazardous materials could be encountered during the construction period.

*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:*

Standard protocol for the proper handling of contaminated soil, if encountered, would be followed. The project would comply with all applicable rules and regulations related to hazardous materials.

**Air Quality**

*Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Short-term emissions of pollutants would occur in conjunction with the use of machinery and vehicles during the construction period. Long-term operational emissions of pollutants would occur from on-road vehicle use of the new expressway facility.

*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:*

Various measures to reduce exhaust emissions specified in the Section 7-1.01F of the Caltrans Standard Specifications may be implemented. The project will also comply with

Rule 403.2 of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District related to controlling fugitive dust emissions.

### **Biological Resources**

#### *Adverse Environmental Effects:*

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1A) would potentially result in permanent effects on 3.40 acres of Waters of the State. Barstow wooly sunflower, desert cymopterus, Mojave spineflower, crowned muilla, and Joshua tree and suitable habitat for these species would be directly and indirectly affected by the implementation of the Preferred Alternative. In addition, habitat for burrowing owl, loggerhead shrike, Le Conte's thrasher, and American badger would be affected through implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would also result in permanent loss of habitat for two threatened and endangered species, the desert tortoise and the Mohave ground squirrel. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative also has the potential to result in the introduction of invasive species in the facility footprint and beyond.

#### *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:*

For impacts to jurisdictional Waters of the State, a 1600 Permit from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and a waste discharge permit from Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Lahontan Region would be required. Pre-construction surveys, protection of special status plants in place, and transplantation of individual plants will occur to reduce impacts to plant species. Preconstruction survey, biological monitoring, implementation of buffers around nesting/breeding areas, relocation, and training of worker will all be used as methods to protect species, threatened/endangered and otherwise, during the construction period. During project operation, northbound and southbound movement for desert tortoises and other animal species would be facilitated through oversized soft-bottomed culverts to the east and west of US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). Efforts to curb the spread of nonnative species of plants will be undertaken as part of the project, including cleaning of all equipment to remove nonnative dirt, seeds, and other debris and post-construction plantings of native species.