UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

October 24, 2013

Mr. Kennon Corey
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208
Palm Springs, California 92011

Subject: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, Riverside County, California (CEQ # 20130256)

Dear Mr. Corey:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP or Plan) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA reviewed the Draft EIS for the MSHCP and provided comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on March 7, 2005. We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) and requested additional information on impacts to waters of the U.S., consultation with Tribal governments, environmental justice issues, conformity with air quality standards, and impacts to cultural resources and migratory birds. The EPA reviewed the Final EIS and provided comments to the FWS on May 15, 2006.

Based on our review of the DSEIS, we have rated the Preferred Alternative and the document as LO-1, Lack of Objections – Adequate (see the enclosed "Summary of EPA Rating Definitions"). The Preferred Alternative would result in the issuance of a Major Amendment to the approved Coachella Valley MSHCP to include the City of Desert Hot Springs and Mission Springs Water District as Permittees of the Plan. Since the City of Desert Hot Springs was previously a Permittee, and was, therefore, included in the analyses prepared for the Draft and Final EISs, and the limited Covered Activities proposed for the Mission Springs Water District have been adequately addressed in the DSEIS, we have no objections to this action.

We recommend that the Final SEIS include a section devoted to climate change. This section should contain not only a description of anticipated climate change impacts to Covered Species—and the habitats on which they depend—over the MSHCP permit term, but also the efforts that would be taken to minimize or mitigate these impacts. The EPA believes that the long duration of the permit term (75 years), and the extreme warming anticipated to occur in the planning area, warrants the inclusion of a climate change mitigation and adaptation plan in the MSHCP.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DSEIS, and are available to discuss our comments. When the FSEIS is released, please send one CD copy to this office (specify Mail Code CED-2). If you have

any questions, please contact me at 415-972-3521, or contact Jason Gerdes, the lead reviewer for this project. Mr. Gerdes can be reached at 415-947-4221 or gerdes.jason@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosures: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions