UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

August 12, 2013

James Shankel
Senior Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Planning
464 W. 4th Street, 6th Floor MS 827
San Bernardino, California 92401-1400

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed SR-58 Hinkley Expressway Project, San Bernardino County, California (CEQ #20130205)

Dear Mr. Shankel:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document. As described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), this project proposes to widen and realign State Route 58 (SR-58) from a two-lane conventional highway to a four-lane expressway near the unincorporated community of Hinkley, from Post Mile (PM) 22.2 to PM 31.1. The FEIS identifies Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative, and proposes a southerly alignment running approximately 0.5 mile south of the existing SR-58. Our review and comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and provided comments to Caltrans in our letter of February 19, 2013. We rated the project Lack of Objections (LO), but had minor concerns about impacts to biological resources. We appreciate the changes made to the document and additional mitigation measures which have been committed to in the FEIS and Environmental Commitments Record. We are particularly encouraged to see a commitment to identify, approve, and purchase all mitigation lands prior to any construction activity. Furthermore, we commend Caltrans for including additional design modifications in the FEIS that reduce the number of anticipated relocations of Hinkley residents. We hope Caltrans will continue to minimize the project's impacts to the community of Hinkley throughout the final design and construction phase. Based upon Caltrans' response to EPA's comments, we have no further concerns with the proposed project.

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We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. If you have any questions, please contact Clifton Meek, the lead reviewer for this project, at 415-972-3370 or meek.clifton@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

for

Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

CC via email: Ray Vizgirdas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Chisholm, California Department of Transportation