

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

On November 19, 2007, Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) circulated a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluating the potential impacts of the Marin Municipal Water District Desalination Project. MMWD is proposing a 5 million gallon per day (MGD) desalination plant to be located in the City of San Rafael, California. Certain infrastructure would be oversized so that it could accommodate potential expansion of the plant. In the event MMWD decides to expand the plant, expansion would occur in 5 MGD increments, up to a maximum capacity of 15 MGD – i.e., to 10 MGD, and to 15 MGD. “Raw water” or “feed water” from San Rafael Bay would be collected through an intake at the end of the proposed refurbished Marin Rod & Gun Club pier near the Richmond–San Rafael Bridge and subjected to various forms of treatment to produce drinkable (potable) water. The desalination process would convert about half the volume of raw water taken from the Bay into drinking water. The remaining water, or brine, would be discharged back to the Bay via an outfall operated by the Central Marin Sanitary Agency (CMSA). Blending of brine with CMSA’s treated wastewater effluent would reduce the concentration of dissolved salts in the brine prior to its release into San Rafael Bay. MMWD would also implement additional water conservation measures which, in combination with the desalination plant, would make up the shortfall of approximately 6,700 acre-feet per year (AFY) of additional water needed to supply MMWD’s estimated needs during droughts and to meet additional growth projected to occur within the service area to the year 2025. Subsequent phases could be implemented to increase capacity to 15 MGD if necessary.

COMMENT PERIOD

During the public review period for the Draft EIR, which closed on March 28, 2008, MMWD received comments from government agencies, organizations, and individuals. Comments on the proposed project also were received at two public hearings held in San Rafael on December 17, 2007, and in Mill Valley on January 31, 2008. The following sections provide the comments received on the Draft EIR and responses to those comments.

- Section 3.0: Comments from Federal Agencies
- Section 4.0: Comments from State Agencies
- Section 5.0: Comments from Regional Agencies and Organizations
- Section 6.0: Comments from Local Agencies and Organizations
- Section 7.0: Comments from Individuals
- Section 8.0: Comments from Public Hearings

Many similar comments were received from different agencies and individuals. These comments focused on the following issues: alternatives considered in the Draft EIR, conservation, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, the potential to vote on the project, and water quality. Master responses have been prepared to address these issues and are presented in Section 2.0.

To locate a Master Response, comment, or comment response, see the Table of Contents. Reference materials cited in this volume are included in Volume 1, Chapter 10.0.

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In accordance with Section 15132 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, this document, together with the revised Draft EIR, constitutes the Final EIR for the Marin Municipal Water District Desalination Project. The Final EIR reproduces the original Draft EIR in its entirety with text revisions marked in strikethrough and underline. The revised EIR is included as Volume 1.

The Final EIR includes additional information that clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the information contained in the Draft EIR.

In addition to the two public hearings held during the Draft EIR review period, two public workshops were also conducted. These workshops were held in Kentfield at the College of Marin on January 10, 2008, and in Larkspur at Redwood High School on February 28, 2008.