



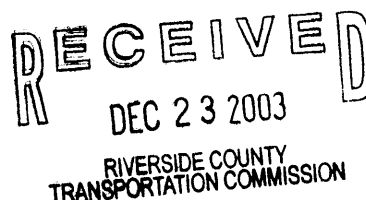
**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 532711  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90053-2325

December 19, 2003

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

Office of the Chief  
Regulatory Branch

Mahfoud Licha  
Federal Highway Administration  
650 Capitol Mall, 4-100  
Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Mr. Licha:

At the request of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the California Department of Transportation (Department) and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been asked to participate in the evaluation of the purpose and need for the State Route 79 Project (Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road).

We appreciate the opportunity for early involvement in the State Route 79 Project. Pursuant to the NEPA/CWA Section 404 Integration Process Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the above agencies have also requested our concurrence on the purpose and need statements on the above project per your letter dated October 27, 2000. Although the MOU does not require our final concurrence on the purpose and need statements until the Draft EIS development, we are providing our preliminary agreement on the purpose and need statements by means of this response letter.

My staff has completed a review of the purpose and need statements. Our feedback during meetings, conference calls, and in previous written correspondence has precipitated revisions to several draft statements over the course of the past two months. We do not have any substantive objections to the most current version (dated December 18, 2003) of the purpose statement. As you may know, the overall project purpose provides for a more specific definition of the purpose and need of the project. It is important that the overall project purpose be specific enough to define the needs, but not so restrictive as to preclude all discussion of alternatives. The defined project purpose is used to evaluate practicable alternatives under the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Accordingly, we endorse the following language for the project purpose:

*To construct a realigned SR 79 facility between Domenigoni Parkway and Gilman Springs Road that will increase capacity to facilitate the regional movement of people and goods for the planning design year of 2030, enhance safety, and protect right-of-way needed for the SR 79 facility improvements.*

In accordance with the provisions of the MOU, we offer our preliminary agreement on the December 18, 2003 draft version of the Purpose and Need Statement. We appreciate your efforts to seek our early participation in this process and we look forward to our continued involvement with the SR 79 project. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Stephanie Hall of my staff at (213) 452-3410. Please refer to this letter and Corps reference number 200400289-SJH in your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron O. Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Aaron O. Allen, Ph. D  
Acting Chief, Regulatory Branch

Enclosure(s)

CC:

FHWA, Maiser Khaled  
FHWA, Larry Vinzant  
EPA, Liz Varnhagen  
EPA, Mary Butterwick  
USFWS, Doreen Stadtlander  
USFWS, Karin Cleary Rose  
RWQCB-Region 8, Adam Fischer  
CDFG, Scott Dawson  
Caltrans-District 8, Marie Petry  
Caltrans-District 8, Aaron Burton  
Caltrans, Susan Glasgow  
RCTC, Hideo Sugita  
RCTC, Cathy Bechtel  
RCTC, Bill Hughes  
RCTC, Gustavo Quintero  
CH2M HILL, Rick Simon  
CH2M HILL, Carolyn Washburn