



TO: California Office of Planning and Research
Responsible AND Trustee Agencies AND Federal Agencies
Other Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

PROJECT: Inland Empire Utilities Agency Chino Basin Program

LEAD AGENCY: Inland Empire Utilities Agency

Date: September 15, 2021

NOTICE OF PREPARATION:

The Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Chino Basin Program (CBP or Project or Program). The IEUA is seeking input from the general public, public agencies, and interested parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that should be analyzed in the EIR, including input regarding any topics or specific issues that are germane to a particular agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. A short description of the Project, as well as the location and potential environmental effects, are discussed below. A detailed project description is provided as an attachment to this Notice of Preparation (NOP). In accordance with Section 15060(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines the IEUA has determined that an EIR will be prepared to address all of the standard issues identified in the Standard Environmental Assessment Form/Initial Study. Thus, no Initial Study accompanies this NOP.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE/TRUSTEE AGENCIES: The IEUA is preparing the CBP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) as the Lead Agency, in cooperation with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), State Water Resources Control Board, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) as responsible agencies. The California Water Commission (CWC) is a Responsible Agency, as it is the Agency that has conditionally awarded IEUA with funding to implement the CBP through the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). Other agencies that may be Responsible Agencies or Trustee Agencies include: Cucamonga Valley Water District, City of Fontana, Fontana Water Company, Jurupa Community Service District, Three Valleys Water District, and Western Municipal Water District. The Chino Basin Watermaster, while not a Public Agency, is the court-created entity that administers the Judgment that adjudicated the groundwater rights of the Chino Groundwater Basin (Chino Basin), and as such, modifications proposed by the CBP to the Safe Storage Capacity and facilities proposed under the CBP that might impact the Chino Basin would occur under the authority of the Watermaster.

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project would occur within IEUA's service area, which occurs almost entirely within the Chino Basin. IEUA's service area is located in southwestern San Bernardino County, and serves approximately 875,000 residents in a 242-square mile service area, while the Chino Basin consists of about 235-square miles of the upper Santa Ana River watershed. The Chino Basin is bounded:

- on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains and the Cucamonga Basin;
- on the east by the Rialto-Colton Basin, Jurupa Hills, and the Pedley Hills;
- on the south by the La Sierra Hills and the Temescal Basin; and
- on the west by the Chino Hills, Puente Hills, and the Spadra, Pomona, and Claremont Basins.

The Chino Basin is mapped within the USGS – Corona North, Cucamonga Peak, Devore, Fontana, Guasti, Mount Baldy, Ontario, Prado Dam, Riverside West and San Dimas Quadrangles, 7.5 Minute Series topographic maps. The center of the Chino Basin is located near the intersection of Haven Avenue and

Mission Boulevard at Longitude 34.038040N, and Latitude 117.575954W. The majority of the infrastructure proposed as part of the CBP is proposed in the northern portion of the Basin, north of the Interstate 10 Freeway. The map provided in Exhibit 1 contains an overview of the proposed facilities and their general proposed locations as mapped within the Chino Basin and surrounding area.

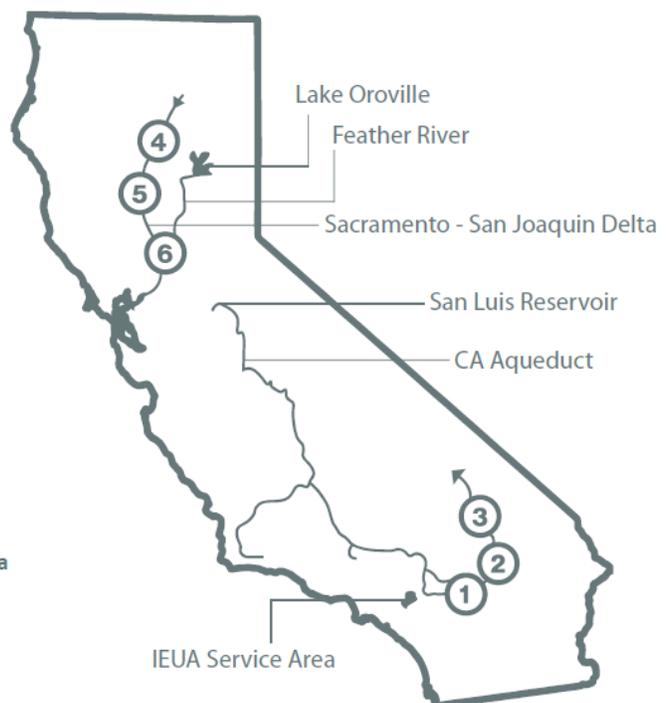
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The CBP was submitted for Proposition 1 – WSIP funding and was awarded \$206.9M in conditional funding in July 2018. Under the WSIP, the CBP is proposed to be a 25-year conjunctive use project that proposes to use advanced water purification to treat and store up to 15,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of recycled water in the Chino Basin and would extract the water during “call” years, which will likely be in dry seasons.

The proposed CBP is uniquely designed to deliver public benefits including a highly reliable, dedicated environmental water supply to benefit Bay-Delta instream flows, as well as enhance water supply reliability and improve water quality for water users in Southern California. The CBP would increase additional available groundwater supplies in the adjudicated Chino Basin through increased water recycling that would result from operation of a new advanced water purification facility (AWPF) and through groundwater storage by operation of new injection wells. The CBP would then dedicate a commensurate amount of water generated by the AWPF for Chino Basin use to provide for an exchange of State Water Project supplies in Lake Oroville in northern California that would otherwise be delivered to southern California. The additional Lake Oroville water would subsequently be released in the form of pulse flows in the Feather River to improve habitat conditions for native salmonids and achieve environmental benefits (refer to the Exhibit below). IEUA’s partner and the State Water Project Contractor that will facilitate the exchange for the CBP is Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan).

How the Program Works



- 1 Treat non-potable and recycled water supplies with advanced water technology (e.g. reverse osmosis)
- 2 Recharge and store treated water in Chino groundwater basin every year
- 3 Pump groundwater from storage to local SWP Contractor in dry and critically-dry years
 - Water conveyed through existing infrastructure and sent to southern California customers
- 4 SWP transfers equivalent amount of water at Oroville reservoir
 - Water released from Oroville for environmental benefits
- 5 Water released during hydrologically dry years to Feather River
 - Pulse flows to improve survival of outmigrating salmon
- 6 Water flows downstream through the Bay Delta



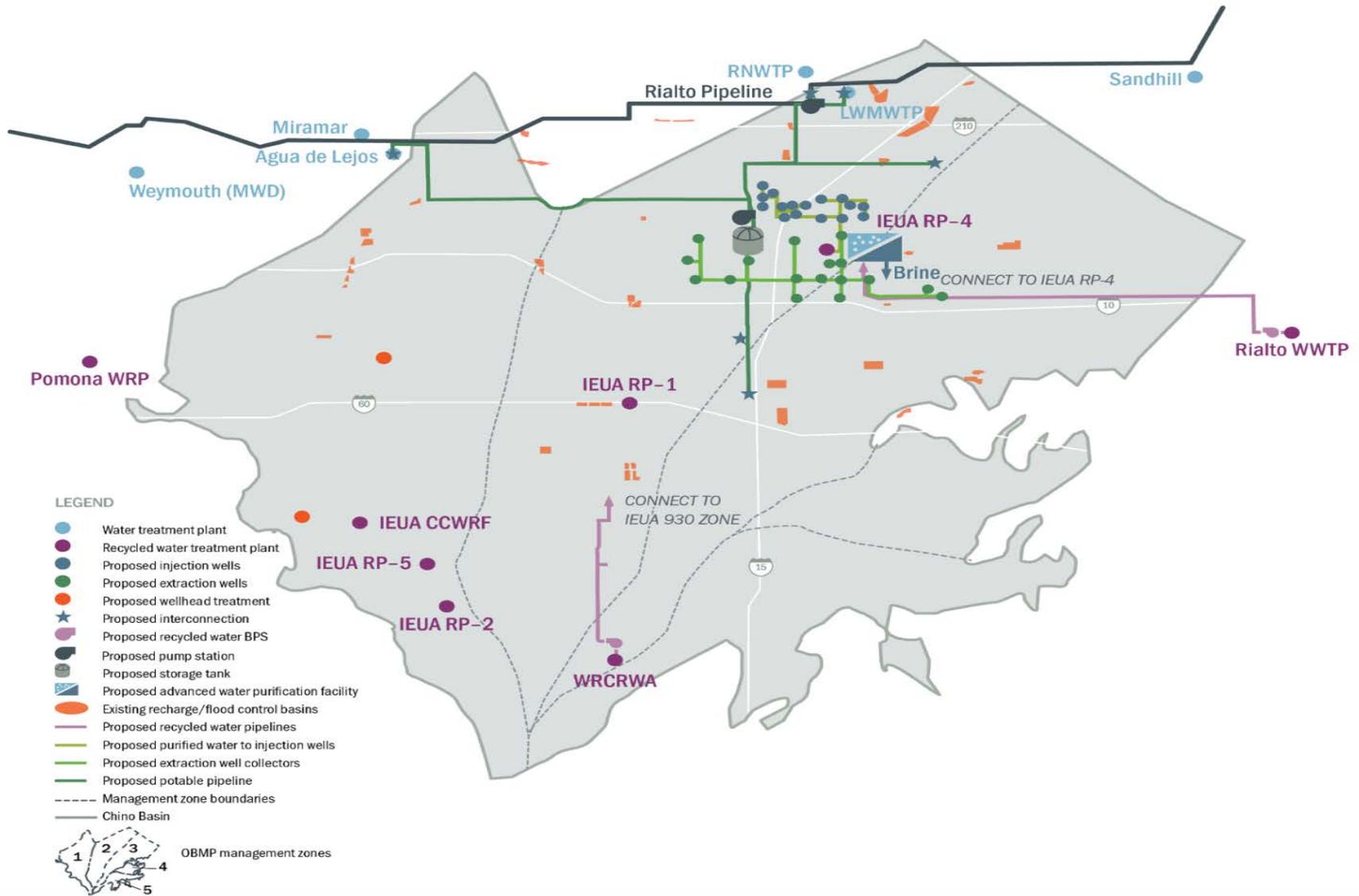


EXHIBIT 1

The CBP would produce 15,000 AFY of new water supply for a period of 25-years to provide for the State exchange, to be used in blocks of up to 50,000 AFY in hydrologically drier years when pulse flows in the Feather River would provide the most ecosystem benefit and other SWP operations would not be affected. The exchange would be administered through agreements with the DWR, the CDFW, Metropolitan, and other project partners.

Additionally, new water stored in the Chino Basin would also enhance emergency response water supply availability for IEUA and other participating agencies during crises such as flood or seismic events that disrupt imported water infrastructure. The infrastructure included in the CBP is consistent with infrastructure identified to reduce recycled water salinity for regulatory compliance as well as water infrastructure that has been identified through IEUA’s Integrated Water Resources Plan (IRP) effort.

The program would rely on water transfer agreements through Metropolitan. For every acre-foot of water requested for north of the Delta ecosystem benefits, IEUA would pump locally stored groundwater and deliver it to Metropolitan or use the water locally instead of taking raw imported water from Metropolitan (referred to as “in lieu”). Metropolitan would then leave behind an equivalent amount of water in Lake Oroville to be dedicated and released for the requested ecosystem benefit. The CBP can be operated in a way to provide up to 50,000 AFY of water for up to 7.5 years, with a consecutive draw of no more than 3 years, of the 25-year program (up to 375,000 AF total) as long as the groundwater extraction does not exceed the approved borrow amount. This would result in balancing the PUTs (the components to recharge purified water to the Chino Basin) and TAKEs (the components to extract groundwater and convey potable water supply) to the Chino Basin at the end of the 25-year program, i.e., up to 375,000 AF would be recharged over 25 years and the same amount could be extracted over 25 years. The CBP includes two main categories of facilities: PUT and TAKE components. The PUT and TAKE components are summarized in the Table below.

SUMMARY OF PUT AND TAKE COMPONENTS

PUT Components	TAKE Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary recycled water supply and conveyance • Advanced water purification facility (AWPF) • Purified water pumping and conveyance • Groundwater recharge (injection wells and/or recharge basins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwater extraction and treatment • Potable water pumping and conveyance • Potable water usage (Metropolitan pump back or in-lieu)

Ultimately, the CBP brings together these components cost-effectively and greatly enhances flexibility and resiliency to regional and local water operations, particularly during future extended droughts expected as climate change continues to impact California. The CBP’s proposed AWPF, new injection and extraction facilities, conveyance facilities, and water system interconnections will allow more optimal management of local water supplies, including meeting water quality requirements for the continued use of recycled water within the Chino Basin, improved storage and recovery operations, as well as redundancies in water delivery infrastructure that will facilitate future rehabilitation and replacement of existing infrastructure.

Additionally, the CBP will provide up to 150,000 acre-feet (AF) of storage capacity in the Chino Groundwater Basin to be used for deposit of up to 15,000 AF of advanced treated water in each year for 25-years; this figure was calculated assuming that deposits or “PUTS” of water into the Basin would be withdrawn at varying “TAKE” rates, enabling additional water storage in the Basin up to 150,000 AF in total. As previously discussed, this stored water will be accessible for withdrawal at a maximum rate of 50,000 AFY when an ecosystem need arises. This requires an increase in the Safe Storage Capacity of the Chino Basin in order to accommodate an addition of up to 150,000 AF of managed storage above the existing Safe Storage Capacity (700,000 AF through June 30, 2030, and to 620,000 AF from July 1, 2030 through June 30, 2035).

As such, the CBP would contemplate a permanent increase in Safe Storage Capacity up to 850,000 AF in order to accommodate the CBP and after a 25-year period, the increased managed storage will be available for local use, therefore reducing dependence on imported water, improving water quality, and providing a new local water supply for the Chino Basin. This permanent increase would supersede the Safe Storage Capacity that was approved in March of 2021 by the IEUA Board and subsequently approved by the Chino Basin Watermaster in May 2021.

The following environmental issues will be analyzed in the EIR: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology/soils, greenhouse gas emissions/climate change, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, noise, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities/service systems, and wildfire.

SCOPING MEETING: A public scoping meeting will be held to receive verbal public comments and suggestions on the environmental issues associated with implementation of the CBP that will be addressed in the EIR. It will include a brief presentation providing an overview of the facilities proposed in the CBP and the CEQA process. After the presentation, oral comments will be accepted. Written comment forms will be made available for those who wish to submit comments in writing at the scoping meeting. The scoping meeting will be open to the public and held at the following location:

Inland Empire Utility Agency
Agency Headquarters, Board Room
6075 Kimball Avenue, Building A, Chino, CA 91708
At 6:00 PM on October 6, 2021

THIRTY DAY COMMENT PERIOD: Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines (Cal Code Regs., Title 14 para. 15000 *et seq.*) Section 15082(a), any response and/or comments to this NOP must be submitted to this office as soon as possible but **not later than thirty (30) days** after the date upon this Notice. The Notice of Preparation comment period begins on September 15, 2021 and ends on October 14, 2021.

This Notice of Preparation and Draft Project Description can be reviewed on the IEUA Website at <https://www.ieua.org/read-our-reports/public-notices/>

Please send your written responses to this Notice, including any comments you may have on this project, by 5:00 PM on October 14, 2021 via regular mail or e-mail to:

Ms. Sylvie Lee, P.E.
Inland Empire Utilities Agency
6075 Kimball Avenue
Chino, CA 91708
Tel: (909) 993-1600; Email: Slee@ieua.org