

# **Appendix 3**

## **Environmental Checklist**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION**

CEQA authorizes the Secretary of Natural Resources to certify that state regulatory programs meeting certain environmental standards are exempt from the preparation of a separate EIR, negative declaration or initial study. (Pub. Resource Code, § 21080.5) Basin planning is a certified as exempt and the Regional board include the substitute environmental documents (SED) to comply with CEQA. According to the State Water Board regulations for the implementation of CEQA (Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 23, § 3777), the SED shall contain a written report containing the following: A brief description of the project, identification of any significant or potentially significance adverse environmental impacts of the project, an analysis of reasonable alternatives to the project and mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any significant or potentially significant adverse environmental impacts, and an environmental analysis of the reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance. A description of the project is included in this appendix with more detail provided in the Staff Report. The environmental setting of the Mojave River is described in Section 4 of the Staff Report. The environmental analysis of the project and reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance is included in this Appendix.

### **Project Description**

The following checklist and responses constitute part of the substitute environmental documentation that is required to support the adoption of an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (known as the Basin Plan) that would make changes to Beneficial Use designations in Chapter 2 Beneficial Uses, modify language related to water quality objectives for the Mojave River in Chapter 3 Water Quality and add language to Chapter 4 Implementation. More specifically, the amendment proposes to add the RARE and BIOL beneficial use designations to Deep Creek and the West Fork Mojave River and to three reaches of the mainstem Mojave River. The three reaches are 1) between Bear Valley Road and Helendale, 2) the reach through Camp Cady Wildlife Area, and 3) the reach through Afton Canyon. Additionally, the COLD freshwater habitat beneficial use will be de-designated for the Mojave River downstream of the Lower Narrows extending to the river's terminus at Soda Lake. The proposed amendment also revises the footnote language in Table 3-20 to clarify the application of Basin Plan water quality objectives for specific reaches of the Mojave River and adds the Mojave River to the list of rivers eligible for federal Wild and Scenic designation in Table 4.9-1. Lastly, the amendment adds language to the Offroad Vehicle section on Page 4.11-8 to include desert riparian habitat to the types of areas that should be avoided when siting offroad vehicle routes.

Currently the entire Mojave River is designated for both the COLD and WARM freshwater habitat beneficial uses. Certain water quality objectives, such as for dissolved oxygen and ammonia, vary depending on whether the COLD or WARM beneficial use are applicable. The de-designation of COLD from a portion of the Mojave River would mean that the water quality objectives associated with COLD would no longer apply to that portion of the Mojave River. This means that receiving water limitations developed for regulatory permits where only the WARM beneficial use applies could be higher for some constituents than for where COLD applies. However, this is not likely to have a significant impact water quality in the Mojave River, as discussed below in the section on Hydrology and Water Quality.

## Environmental Checklist

The Environmental Checklist discusses potential environmental impacts of the project and includes a discussion of ways to mitigate the significant effects identified, as required by CEQA.

An SED is required to include an analysis of the reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance with the project. (Cal. Code Regs., tit.23, § 3777.). The project is not expected to lead to more stringent conditions or permit terms, or activities to comply with the designation and de-designation of the beneficial uses. Therefore, no reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance are identified for the project and there are no environmental impacts associated with reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance. The CEQA checklist includes an environmental analysis of impacts of the project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>I. AESTHETICS</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial use designations for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to physical changes to the environment that would affect this resource area. There are no construction activities or other actions associated with adoption of the amendment that would change the visual character of the area. Consequently, adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment will not lead to changes to any scenic vista, cause damage to any scenic resource or create any new source of light or glare.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a ) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial use designations for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to physical changes to the environment. There are no activities associated with the proposed amendment that would lead to zoning changes or the conversion of farmland to other uses. Consequently, adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment will not impact farmland or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or have impacts on forest land.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>III. AIR QUALITY</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				X
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>III. AIR QUALITY</b>				
exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial use designations for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not conflict with any applicable air quality plan or cause the violation of any air quality standard. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that would expose people to air pollutants or create objectionable odors. It will also not lead to an increase in any criteria pollutant or lead to changes in air quality in general.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal,				X

<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X

Among the changes to the beneficial uses being proposed is to de-designate the Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD) beneficial use from a portion of the Mojave River starting downstream of the Lower Narrows extending to the river's terminus at Soda Lake. De-designating COLD will change the applicable water quality objectives for dissolved oxygen, ammonia and water temperature, which would be based on the WARM freshwater habitat beneficial use and not COLD. This could result in changes to the effluent limitations and receiving water limitations in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority's (VWVRA) wastewater treatment facility discharge to the Mojave River. Prior to any change in effluent limitations in VWVRA's NPDES permit, an antidegradation and anti-backsliding analysis would be conducted. If a change in the effluent limitation or receiving water limitation were to occur in VWVRA's NPDES discharge, VWVRA's discharge is not expected to change water quality in the receiving water that would significantly impact biological resources. Under typical hydrologic conditions, perennial flow in the Mojave River does not extend downstream of the Lower Narrows USGS gage, rather the surface water infiltrates into the river channel. Approximately two miles downstream of this, surface water re-appears and perennial flow in this segment of the river is maintained by the discharge of treated wastewater effluent from the wastewater treatment facility operated by VWVRA.

The non-applicability of the DO and Ammonia water quality objective for COLD in a portion of the Mojave River is expected to have a less than significant impact to biological resources. If VWVRA's effluent limitations would change to a higher effluent limitation, that effluent limitation would still need to be protective of the WARM beneficial use. Consequently, any change to ambient water quality resulting from the de-designation of COLD would still meet water quality standards and have a less than significant impact on biological resources.

Amending the Basin Plan to both add and remove beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to adverse impacts to biological resources.

Moreover, the purpose of adding the BIOL and RARE beneficial uses to the Basin Plan is to protect important riparian habitat along the Mojave River, and therefore it will not lead to adverse impacts to wetlands or interfere with the movement of fish and wildlife. Similarly, it will not conflict with local policies protecting biological resources or with any approved habitat conservation plan.

<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in § 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X

There are several important historical and archaeological sites along the Mojave River that include Camp Cady, which is also a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Area, and unidentified locations where Native American villages were present. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that will cause impacts to cultural resources. Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not cause adverse impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources near the Mojave River nor will it lead to the disturbance of any human remains.

<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				X
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo				X

<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				X
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to both add and remove beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to changes in geological conditions or cause soil erosion or loss of topsoil. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment, therefore no changes to geology and soils are expected to occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Generate Greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?				X
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to the generation of greenhouse gases, either directly or indirectly, or conflict with any plan, policy or regulation related to the reduction of greenhouse gases. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment, therefore no increase in greenhouse gas emissions will occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5				X

<b>VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to the creation of any significant hazard to the public due to the transport or release of hazardous materials. It will also not result in any safety hazard near any public or private airport, affect the implementation of any emergency response plan or increase the risk to people or structures due to wildland fires. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that will cause or contribute to safety hazards or expose people to hazardous materials.

<b>IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			X	

<b>IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				X
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X

<b>IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

The proposed Basin Plan amendment includes the de-designation of the Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD) beneficial use from a portion of the Mojave River starting downstream of the Lower Narrows to the river's terminus at Soda Lake. Under typical hydrologic conditions, perennial flow in the Mojave River downstream of the Lower Narrows does not extend very far, rather the surface water infiltrates into the river channel. It then re-appears again further downstream near the wastewater treatment facility operated by Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA). In this section of the river, perennial surface flow is maintained by the discharge of treated wastewater effluent from VWVRA's facility. VWVRA's discharge is regulated under the Clean Water Act with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (NPDES) that is issued by the Water Board. The water quality objectives used to develop the effluent limitations in the NPDES permit are based on the water quality objectives in the Basin Plan.

Some water quality objectives, such as dissolved oxygen and ammonia, vary depending upon whether the COLD or WARM beneficial uses are assigned to a specific waterbody. Ammonia criteria are calculated based on equations that differ depending upon whether they are meant to protect COLD or WARM, with criteria for COLD generally being slightly lower than those for WARM. The Basin Plan also contains Dissolved Oxygen (DO) objectives and the daily minimum DO objective for WARM is 3 mg/L, while the daily minimum objective for COLD is 4 mg/L. De-designating the COLD beneficial use for a portion of the Mojave River will cause the ammonia water quality objective for WARM and the water quality objective for WARM to only apply in that portion of the Mojave River, with the ammonia water quality objective for COLD and the water quality objective for COLD no longer applicable.

The non-applicability of the DO and Ammonia water quality objective for COLD in a portion of the Mojave River is expected to have a less than significant impact to hydrology and water quality. Prior to any change in effluent limitations in VWVRA's NPDES permit, an antidegradation and anti-backsliding analysis would be conducted. If VWVRA's effluent limitations would change to a higher effluent limitation, that effluent limitations would still need to be protective of the WARM beneficial use. Therefore, any change to ambient water quality resulting from the de-designation of COLD would still meet water quality standards and have a less than significant impact.

Furthermore, ammonia concentrations in the river are generally not detectable, based on the receiving water monitoring conducted by VWVRA and other available water quality data. DO concentrations in the Mojave River are also not likely to be impacted by the de-designation of COLD, since ambient air and water temperature are the primary factors that determine DO concentrations in the river. Available water quality data provided in Section X of this staff report indicate that low DO concentrations do occur at times downstream of VWVRA's discharge point, but they also show the same tendency upstream at the Lower Narrows. This is likely due to seasonally high water temperatures and flow conditions, which are physical factors that influence ambient DO concentrations.

Consequently, adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment will not lead to the violation of any water quality standards, impact groundwater supplies, alter existing drainage patterns, or create or contribute additional runoff. Any degradation to water quality is expected to be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>X. LAND USE AND PLANNING</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not conflict with land use plans, policies or regulations. The locations along the Mojave River and on Deep Creek where the BIOL and RARE beneficial uses are proposed to be designated already have been designated for special protection by either CDFW or BLM. Adoption of the proposed amendment will not cause any changes to land use.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XI. MINERAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to the loss of availability of any mineral resource or any locally-important resource recovery site. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that will impact mineral resources in any way.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XII. NOISE</b>				
<b>Would the project result in:</b>				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to an increase in noise levels or the generation of vibrations. Moreover, no noise associated with public or private airports will occur. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that will cause an increase in noise.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to an increase in population growth or result in the displacement of people or existing housing. There are no projects or activities associated with the proposed amendment that will impact the population in the area or otherwise affect the need for and supply of available housing.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?				X
Police protection?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>				
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to any change to the provision of public services nor would it create the need for new facilities to provide public services. The proposed amendment will not lead to an increase in population or otherwise impact the need for public services.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XV. RECREATION</b>				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to an increase in the use of parks or other recreational facilities nor would it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The proposed amendment does will not lead to any activity or project that would increase the demand for recreational facilities in the area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC</b>				
<b>Would the project:</b>				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?				X
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to physical changes to the environment and will not affect traffic patterns or change any feature of roadways or parking facilities. Consequently, the proposed Basin Plan amendment will not conflict with any plan, ordinance or policy regarding the effectiveness of the local transportation system, alter any air traffic patterns or create any hazards related to design features.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>				
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?				X
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?				X

The Mojave River corridor played an important role for Native Americans due to the critical resource it provided as a water source and for the riparian habitat that was important both for wildlife and for the plant resources used by tribal people. Several village sites existed along the Mojave River at various locations between the confluence of Deep Creek and the West Fork Mojave River and the lower portion of the river in Afton Canyon. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that will lead to earth moving activities. The project is not expected to have an impact on tribal cultural resources.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVIII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS</b>				
<b>Would the project</b>				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives will not lead to an impact to utilities and service systems. There are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment that would create a need for new water or wastewater infrastructure or other changes to facilities at the Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority. Consequently, adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment would not cause any exceedance of wastewater treatment requirements, require the construction of new wastewater treatment or storm water facilities, affect local water supply. It also will not lead to any increase in the need for solid waste disposal.

<b>XVIV. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?				X
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				X

The proposed Basin Plan amendment will not directly or indirectly lead to environmental degradation and or cause adverse effects, as discussed above in the checklist responses for the specific environmental categories. There are also no cumulative impacts that together with other projects and activities in the area would lead to a cumulatively considerable impact. All potential impacts are considered less than significant or there are no expected impacts. Amending the Basin Plan to modify the beneficial uses for the Mojave River and clarify the application of water quality objectives is not expected to lead to physical changes to the environment as there are no construction projects or other activities associated with the proposed amendment.

**DETERMINATION:** (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

  X   I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment

       I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment. However, there are feasible alternatives and/or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact. These alternatives and mitigation measures are discussed in the attached written report.

       I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment. There are no feasible alternatives and/or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts. See the attached written report for a discussion of this determination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **XI. ALTERNATIVES**

An SED must contain an analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the project and reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance that would avoid or substantially reduce any potentially significant adverse environmental impact and still meet project objectives. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §3777, subd. (b)(3).). The adoption of Basin Plan amendments will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts (defined as physical changes in the environment). The Preferred Alternative (i.e., this proposed Basin Plan Amendment) and a No Action Alternative are discussed in this section.

### **A. Alternative 1. No Project**

Under this alternative, the Basin Plan would not be amended to add the BIOL and RARE BU to the Mojave River and its primary tributaries and remove the COLD BU from the Mojave River downstream of the Lower Narrows to Sods Lake. There would also not be clarifying language added to Chapter 3 to aid in the application of the water quality objectives for the Mojave River shown in Table 3-20 nor would the Mojave River be added to the table of rivers in the Lahontan Region eligible for federal Wild and Scenic status in Chapter 4. Language would also not be added in Chapter 4 in the section on Offhighway Vehicles specifying that desert riparian areas should be protected from this activity. This would not achieve the project objective of clarifying the Basin Plan nor would it highlight in the Basin Plan the importance of the desert riparian habitat along the Mojave River.

### **B. Alternative 2. Remove the Basin Plan Prohibition**

Under this alternative, the Basin Plan would be amended to add the BIOL and RARE BU to the Mojave River and its primary tributaries and remove the COLD BU from the Mojave River downstream of the Lower Narrows to Sods Lake. Clarifying language would be added to Chapter 3 to aid in the application of the water quality objectives for the Mojave River shown in Table 3-20 and the Mojave River would be added to the table of rivers in the Lahontan Region eligible for federal Wild and Scenic status in Chapter 4. Additionally, language would be added in Chapter 4 in the section on Offhighway Vehicles specifying that desert riparian areas should be protected from this activity.

## **LIST OF PREPARERS**

The proposed Basin Plan amendment, the technical staff report, and this draft environmental checklist document were prepared by Jennifer Watts, Environmental Scientist with assistance from Jane McCluskey, both at the Water Board's South Lake Tahoe office.

The April 24, 2018 CEQA Scoping Meeting in Apple Valley was prepared and presented by Ms. Watts.

The following additional Water Board staff provided management direction regarding the project, provided information used in preparation of the Basin Plan amendment, and related documents, and/or reviewed preliminary drafts:

**LIST OF PERSONS/AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED ??? Who should we add here?**