

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

**24**

January 29, 2019

**FROM: TERRI RAHHAL, Director  
Land Use Services Department**

**SUBJECT: CHINO AIRPORT GROUNDWATER REMEDIAL PROJECT AND INTERIM  
REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN**

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Chino Airport Groundwater Remedial Project as prepared for the Draft Interim Remedial Action Plan for the Chino Airport, in response to Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (SARWQCB) Clean-up and Abatement Order No. R8-2017-0011.
2. Approve the Draft Interim Remedial Action Plan for the Chino Airport and authorize submittal with the related work plan to SARWQCB.
3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to file a Notice of Determination.  
(Presenter: Terri Rahhal, Director, 387-4431)

**COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.  
Pursue County Goals and Objectives by Working with Other Agencies.**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Approval of the Draft Interim Remedial Action Plan will not result in the use of additional Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). Sufficient appropriation to fund review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was included in the Land Use Services (LUS) Department Planning Division 2018-19 budget, and LUS will be reimbursed by Real Estate Services – Project Management Division, from the \$5,000,000 of Discretionary General Funding approved on March 20, 2018 (Item No. 47), to fund the Chino Airport Groundwater Remedial Project and to reimburse County Airports for costs associated with the SARWQCB Clean-up and Abatement Order No. R8-2017-0011.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The County is moving forward to implement an Interim Remedial Action Plan (IRAP) for groundwater contaminated by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) proximate to the Chino Airport Property (Airport). VOCs are a group of chemical compounds that are volatile at room temperature, and include such substances as gasoline, diesel, paints, paint strippers, aerosol sprays, degreasers, cleansers and disinfectants.

The SARWQCB and the County, with its consultant Tetra Tech, have been working together for many years to investigate the potential historic sources and nature of the contamination and to complete environmental investigations, in order to identify and develop remedial actions in response to the releases and threatened releases at the Airport. The IRAP is the result of all these investigations. It identifies the work required to remediate the VOCs found in groundwater. The purpose of the IRAP is to summarize the environmental conditions at the Airport and use technical data to explain the selection of the preferred remedial actions that will protect public health and the environment. This IRAP was developed as required by the SARWQCB Cleanup and Abatement Order No. R8-2017-0011 for San Bernardino County Department of Airports, Chino Airport, issued in January 2017 (RWQCB, 2017; amending CAO R8-2016-0061).

It is important to note that residents and businesses located above the contaminated groundwater are not using untreated contaminated groundwater for domestic purposes. These consumers obtain their drinking water from municipal sources. Therefore, these residents and businesses are not at risk from consumption of the groundwater. In addition, the groundwater migrating from the Airport to the south-southwest does not pose a risk for vapor intrusion (migration of vapor-forming chemicals into an overlying building). The County prepared a Human Health and Screening Ecological Risk Assessment, which finds that the groundwater migrating from the Airport to the south-southwest does not pose a risk for vapor intrusion. It does conclude, however, that cleanup of the contaminated groundwater is necessary to restore the beneficial use of the aquifer and to protect the groundwater resource.

The preferred remedial alternative described in the IRAP identifies treatment and control measures to clean up the contaminated groundwater, including a pump and treat system and institutional controls. This remedial alternative (Alternative 4A) was selected from fourteen alternatives for being the best way to achieve the objectives identified in the Final Feasibility Study (May 2017) prepared to evaluate options for mitigation of environmental impacts from past Airport operations. Alternative 4A will reduce toxicity, mobility and volume in contaminated groundwater, and is the most likely to prevent future impacts to downgradient and off-site groundwater resources. The IRAP is considered interim because the County is moving forward on an interim basis to initiate a response action as quickly as possible. In the future, additional response actions may be evaluated and implemented, as appropriate.

Public comment on the IRAP was opened on December 18, 2017, and closed on May 18, 2018. Availability for public comment was advertised in the Chino Champion and the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on December 18, 2017 and March 5, 2018; and again in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on April 23, 2018 and the Chino Champion on April 21, 2018. Notices were mailed to residents and businesses located within one mile of the Airport on December 18, 2017, March 5, 2018 and April 20, 2018. The County also created a website for review of the IRAP and related materials (<http://cms.sbcounty.gov/airports/Airports/Chino/CAGRP.aspx>) on which the public could review IRAP-related materials and sign up to receive updates and submit written comments. On January 18, 2018, during the public comment period, the County and SARWQCB held a public meeting at the Chaffey College Chino Community Center in Chino, California. Notice of the

public meeting was published in the Chino Champion and the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on December 18, 2017, and mailed to residents and businesses within one mile of the Airport on December 18, 2017. No comments were received during the public comment period for the IRAP.

The County prepared an Initial Study (IS) for the IRAP that evaluated the potential environmental impacts of the selected remedial alternative, Alternative 4A. Such impacts were found not to be significant, or could be reduced to a level below significant with implementation of mitigation. Accordingly, the County, in exercising its independent judgment, determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was appropriate. The IS/MND was circulated and a Notice of Availability/Notice of Intent to Adopt the MND was circulated for a 30-day comment period to responsible agencies, interested parties, and published in the San Bernardino County Sun on April 10, 2018, and in the Chino Champion on April 14, 2018.

The only comment letter received was from the Chino Basin Watermaster (Watermaster) expressing concerns related to impacts to overall groundwater use in the lower Chino Basin and water resource and habitat protection. The County's response letter notes that the IRAP is complementary to the other remedial efforts being undertaken by the Watermaster, the Chino Desalter Authority (a joint powers authority that purifies water from the lower Chino Basin), and the Inland Empire Utilities Agency. The County has been working with the Watermaster's consultant since the receipt of the comment letter, exchanging data, and verifying modeling scenarios, to confirm that the County's pumping will not have detrimental impacts to the groundwater basin. The County will continue to coordinate with Watermaster's consultant as the remedial work proceeds, which cooperation is expected to include, but not be limited to: exchange of on-going monitoring data and installation of piezometers in County wells to collect groundwater elevation data.

After approval of the IRAP by the SARWQCB, the County will design the selected remedy and draft the related work plan for consideration by the SARWQCB. The work plan is expected to be submitted in Fall 2019. It is anticipated that a contract award for construction of the remedial infrastructure will occur in Summer 2020, which will be submitted to the Board for approval. Construction of the remediation infrastructure is estimated to begin Fall 2020 and continue through 2021.

**PROCUREMENT**

Not Applicable.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS**

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Bart Brizzee, Principal County Counsel and Sophie A. Akins, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on December 17, 2018; Finance (Paloma Hernandez-Barker, Administrative Analyst III, 387-5426) on January 11, 2019; and County Finance and Administration (Matthew Erickson, County Chief Financial Officer, 387-5423) on January 11, 2019.