



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA E-MAIL:

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**Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the
Proposed Menifee Caliber Collision Project (Proposed Project)
(SCH No. 2025020576)**

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) staff appreciate the opportunity to review the above-mentioned document. The City of Menifee is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. To provide context, South Coast AQMD Staff (Staff) has provided a brief summary of the project information and prepared the following comments.

Summary of Proposed Project Information in the IS/MND

Based on the IS/MND, the Proposed Project involves the construction of a one-story, approximately 18,717 square feet (sq ft) collision paint and body repair shop building with six bays on 2.39 gross acres. The project would include 42,689 sq ft of paved surface and approximately 36,166 sq ft of landscaping. Drainage and storm water run-off would be retained from the current condition and would flow to the northwest direction off the Proposed Project site into the proposed biofiltration basin. The Proposed Project is located on the west side of Zeiders Road, north of Keller Road, south of Scott Road, and east of Howard Way in Menifee, Riverside County, California. Construction is expected to commence in February 2025 and last approximately six months.¹

South Coast AQMD Comments

Operational Emissions from Stationary Sources

The IS/MND states that the Proposed Project's operational criteria pollutant emissions are expected partly from the use of two natural gas-fired paint booths.² Emissions from the spray booths and their corresponding natural gas engines, however, appear to not have been included in the total operational emissions for the Proposed Project.³ Failing to account for these emissions in the analysis could lead to an underestimation of the total operational emissions. Staff, therefore, recommends that: 1) the Lead Agency quantify the criteria pollutant emissions from the spray booths and their corresponding natural gas engines; 2) add these emissions to Table 5.3.2

¹ IS/MND Caliber Collision Paint and Auto Body Repair Shop Project. p. 5-10.

² *Ibid.* Appendix B Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Analysis Memorandum. p 1.

³ *Ibid.* p. 5-11 through 5-16.

Operational Emissions and Table 5.3.4 Project Localized Construction and Operational Emissions; and 3) compare the Proposed Project's total operational emissions to South Coast AQMD's air quality significance thresholds and localized significance thresholds (LSTs) to determine the Proposed Project's air quality impacts.^{4, 5}

South Coast AQMD Air Permits and Role as a Responsible Agency

If implementation of the Proposed Project would require the use of new stationary and portable sources, including but not limited to spray booths, emergency generators, fire water pumps, boilers, etc., air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required. The final CEQA document, whether a MND or EIR, should include a discussion about the potentially applicable rules that the Proposed Project needs to comply with. Those rules may include, for example, Rule 201 – Permit to Construct,⁶ Rule 203 – Permit to Operate,⁷ Rule 401 – Visible Emissions,⁸ Rule 402 – Nuisance,⁹ Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust,¹⁰ Rule 481 – Spray Coating Operations,¹¹ Rule 1113 – Architectural Coating,¹² etc. It is important to note that when air permits from South Coast AQMD are required, the role of South Coast AQMD would change from a Commenting Agency to a Responsible Agency under CEQA. In addition, if South Coast AQMD is identified as a Responsible Agency, per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15086, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15096 sets forth specific procedures for a Responsible Agency, including making a decision on the adequacy of the CEQA document for use as part of the process for conducting a review of the Proposed Project and issuing discretionary approvals. Moreover, it is important to note that if a Responsible Agency determines that a CEQA document is not adequate to rely upon for its discretionary approvals, the Responsible Agency must take further actions listed in CEQA Guideline Section 15096(e), which could have the effect of delaying the implementation of the Proposed Project. In its role as CEQA Responsible Agency, the South Coast AQMD is obligated to ensure that the CEQA document prepared for this Proposed Project contains a sufficient project description and analysis to be relied upon in order to issue any discretionary approvals that may be needed for air permits. South Coast AQMD is concerned that the project description and analysis in its current form in the MND is inadequate to be relied upon for this purpose.

For these reasons, the final CEQA document should be revised to include a discussion about any and all new stationary and portable equipment requiring South Coast AQMD air permits, provide the evaluation of their air quality and greenhouse gas impacts, and identify South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project as this information will be relied upon as the basis for the permit conditions and emission limits for the air permit(s). Please contact South Coast

⁴ South Coast AQMD's air quality significance thresholds can be found at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/south-coast-aqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf>

⁵ South Coast AQMD's guidance for performing a localized air quality analysis can be found at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/localized-significance-thresholds>.

⁶ South Coast AQMD. Rule 201 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-201.pdf>

⁷ South Coast AQMD. Rule 203 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-203.pdf>

⁸ South Coast AQMD. Rule 401 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-401.pdf>

⁹ South Coast AQMD. Rule 402 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-402.pdf>

¹⁰ South Coast AQMD. Rule 403 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-403>

¹¹ South Coast AQMD. Rule 481 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-481.pdf>

¹² South Coast AQMD. Rule 1113 available at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1113.pdf>

AQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385 for questions regarding what types of equipment would require air permits. For more general information on permits, please visit South Coast AQMD's webpage at <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>.

Conclusion

The Lead Agency is recommended to revise the CEQA analysis to address the aforementioned comments and provide the necessary evidence to sufficiently support the conclusions reached. If the requested information and analysis are not included in the final CEQA document, either the Final MND or other type of CEQA document, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not doing so. Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(b) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15074, prior to approving the Proposed Project, the Lead Agency shall consider the MND for adoption together with any comments received during the public review process and notify each public agency when any public hearings are scheduled. Please provide South Coast AQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final MND. When responding to issues raised in the comments, detailed reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted must be provided. In addition, if the Lead Agency decides to adopt the Final MND, please provide South Coast AQMD with a notice of any scheduled public hearing(s).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. South Coast AQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Sam Wang, Program Supervisor, at swang1@aqmd.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Wang

Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR
Planning, Rule Development & Implementation

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