

# Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project CEQA Compliance Process

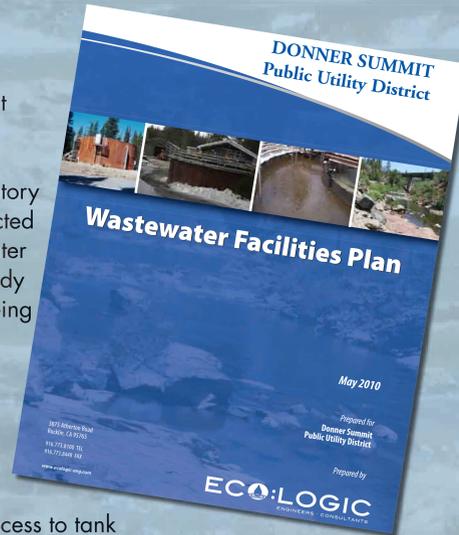
**DONNER SUMMIT**  
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

## 1. Abstract

The Donner Summit Public Utilities District Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Upgrade project would entail improvements and capacity enhancements to the existing WWTP and spray fields that will bring the plant into compliance with its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Approval of the project is a discretionary action by a public agency and, therefore, subject to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of CEQA is to disclose potential project-related impacts to decision makers and the public, identify methods to minimize impacts, identify feasible mitigation and/or alternatives to the project, and solicit and respond to comments from the public and other agencies. The CEQA compliance and public participation process typically takes 6 to 12 months to complete, depending on the type of disclosure document. Initial phases of the CEQA process (background studies and public meetings) began in summer/fall 2010.

## 2. Project Background

In May 2010, DSPUD published a Wastewater Treatment Facilities Plan to investigate alternatives and develop a recommended program for bringing the plant and associated disposal facilities into compliance with regulatory requirements, not only for the existing users but for expected new growth in both DSPUD and Sierra Lakes County Water District (SLCWD). The facilities plan included a siting study which considered environmental constraints. The goal being to develop the optimal project and avoid and minimize impacts to the environment, to the extent feasible.



The primary proposed improvements include:

- Modify existing influent equalization tank with new mixing and aeration systems
- Additional influent equalization storage tank and access to tank
- New headworks facility
- New Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) system
- Construction of a new multi-function membrane and equipment building or combination of two buildings
- Installation of UV disinfection system
- Expansion of effluent disposal to land

The next steps, as they pertain to environmental compliance are as follows:

- Continue to factor environmental considerations into the pre-design process
- Continue the engineering pre-design process
- Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act**
- Apply for Special Use Permit from the U.S. Forest Service and comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**
- Complete the State and Federal Environmental Permitting Process

## 3. What is CEQA?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

CEQA requires state and local agencies to make decisions with environmental consequences in mind by mandating that they:

- Disclose the potential environmental effects of a proposed project to decision makers and the public
- Identify methods to minimize those effects to the environment
- Identify feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives to the project
- Solicit and respond to comments from the public and from other agencies concerned with the project.

Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA are in Title 14 Division 6, Chapter 3 Sections 15000-15387 of the California Code of Regulations.

The CEQA process seeks to accomplish the following five major objectives using the procedures indicated below.

**Disclose Environmental Impacts.** The CEQA process is primarily designed to identify and disclose to decision makers and the public the significant environmental impacts of a proposed project prior to its consideration and approval. This is accomplished by the preparation of CEQA documents such as initial studies, mitigated negative declarations (MNDs), and/or environmental impact reports (EIRs).

**Prevent or Reduce Environmental Damage.** If potential adverse environmental impacts are identified, the CEQA process next attempts to identify ways to prevent or reduce these impacts by requiring consideration of feasible project alternatives or the adoption of mitigation measures. For project impacts that cannot be avoided with appropriate mitigation methods, Findings and a Statement of Overriding Consideration is required. DSPUD aims to mitigate impacts to less than significant levels to the maximum extent practicable.

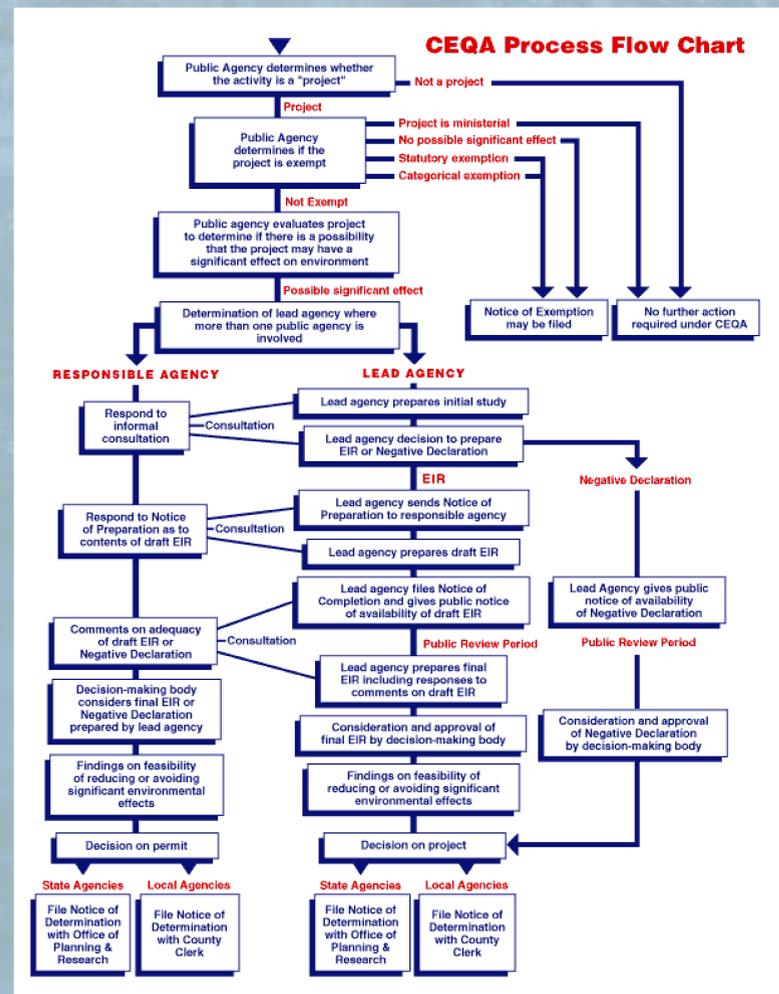
**Promote Interagency Coordination.** Lead, responsible, and trustee agencies assist each other in more thoroughly understanding the potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed project by inter-agency consultations.

**Encourage Public Participation.** The CEQA process encourages and provides opportunities for public participation in the overall project planning process in one or more of the following CEQA processes:

- Scoping meetings
- Receipt of public notice
- Public/agency review and comment on Draft MND or EIR
- Response to comments
- Legal enforcement procedures (CEQA processes)
- Citizen access to the courts

References: PRC sections 21000-21004, CCR (Guidelines) Sections 15002, 15086, 15087.

## 5. What is the Process/Timeline?



DSPUD will serve as the lead agency in the CEQA process. The preliminary aspects of the CEQA process (initial baseline studies) were initiated during summer/fall 2010. A MND typically takes 6 months to complete depending on the type of disclosure document. An EIR, if deemed necessary, takes 12 months or longer to complete. A project website ([www.dspud.com](http://www.dspud.com)) contains current project information.

## 6. How can I get involved?

Public comments are also invited at public meetings, via email, or via mail to DSPUD. DSPUD recommends you:

- Monitor the project website
- Sign up on the mailing list
- Attend the Public Scoping Meeting
- Attend subsequent CEQA public hearings
- Review the Draft CEQA document and submit comments