



County of San Diego

ELISE ROTHSCHILD
Director

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
COMMUNITY HEALTH DIVISION

AMY HARBERT
Assistant Director

5570 Overland Avenue, Suite 102, San Diego, CA 92123
Phone: (858) 694-2888 FAX: (858) 571-4268
1 (800) 253-9933
www.sdcdeh.org

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
INTEGRATED VECTOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

August 23, 2018

The County of San Diego (County) Department of Environmental Health (DEH) is the lead agency in the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the **Integrated Vector Management Program (IVMP) (Proposed Project)** as specified by Section 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

This notice is issued pursuant to Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines. It is intended to inform those persons and organizations that may be concerned with the environmental effects of the Proposed Project. Those public agencies with specific statutory responsibilities are requested to indicate their specific role in the project approval process. The Initial Study for the Proposed Project can be viewed at the Department of Environmental Health at two office locations: 5500 Overland Avenue, Suite 170, San Diego, CA 92123; or 5570 Overland Avenue, Suite 102, San Diego, CA 92123. It is also available at http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/pests/vector_disease.html.

Because of time limits mandated by State law, responses should be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than **September 21, 2018** at 5:00 P.M. Please send your response to:

County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health
Vector Control Program, Attn: KariLyn Merlos
5570 Overland Avenue, Suite 102
San Diego, CA 92123

Or via e-mail: IVMP@sdcounty.ca.gov

SCOPING MEETING

A public meeting to discuss the Proposed Project and potential contents of the PEIR will be held on **August 30, 2018** from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the County Operations Center, Conference Center located at 5520 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The environmental document will be a Program EIR (PEIR) as defined in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. The PEIR is intended to allow the County to examine the overall effects of implementation of the IVMP and to take steps to avoid environmental impacts. As a program within the County DEH, the Vector Control Program (VCP) is responsible for implementing the IVMP.

PROJECT LOCATION

The IVMP includes vector and vector-borne disease surveillance and control services throughout all 18 incorporated cities and the unincorporated areas of San Diego County, totaling approximately 4,261 square miles (Figure 1). This encompasses the VCP's existing service area.

BACKGROUND

The VCP has been reducing and controlling mosquitoes and other vectors, and protecting the county against vector-borne diseases for over 40 years. For the purposes of the CEQA analysis, a vector is defined as an organism that is capable of spreading disease to humans or presents a public nuisance by negatively impacting farm and other outdoor workers, outdoor recreation and tourism industries, real estate values, or the public in general. Vectors may include mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, rodents, and eye gnats. In 1989, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) assumed the powers of a Vector Control District, which is staffed by the VCP.

Since 1989, the VCP has continued to reduce the potential for the spread of diseases and the impact that vectors have on property through ongoing educational outreach, surveillance activities, source reduction (i.e., physical control), and source treatment (i.e., biological and chemical control). The VCP's five core services include (1) early detection of public health threats through comprehensive vector surveillance and testing; (2) control and reduction of vectors that transmit diseases to humans; (3) disseminating vector-borne disease information to provide county residents and property owners with tools for prevention, protection, and reporting of vectors that transmit diseases; (4) appropriate and timely response to vector-related customer complaints; and (5) detection of vector-borne pathogens.

As identified in County Code of Regulatory Ordinances Section 64.201 and the California Health and Safety Code Sections 2001 et. seq, a board of supervisors is allowed under Government Code Section 25842.5 to provide the same services and exercise the powers of a mosquito abatement and vector control district. Pursuant to this statutory authority, the Board resolved to act as a mosquito abatement and vector control district in both the incorporated cities and the unincorporated areas of the county. The city council of each incorporated city in San Diego County consented to the Board's resolution. The Board also resolved to delegate implementation and enforcement duties to the Department of Environmental Health. By Government Code section 25842.5 and County Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 64.201 through 64.206, the VCP is authorized to order responsible persons to control and abate disease-transmitting¹ vectors and eye gnats in San Diego County. The VCP is also authorized by Government Code section 25842.5 to directly control and abate mosquitoes and other vectors and to recover its costs to do so, in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the entire San Diego County community from vector-borne diseases and vector-related public nuisances.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The VCP protects the public from vector-borne disease and nuisance while protecting the environment through a coordinated set of activities collectively known as the IVMP. These activities and services are described in the annual *Engineer's Report*, which provides an overview of the VCP's general practices and procedures. As the Proposed Project, the IVMP would continue to operate using a comprehensive approach by applying various techniques, including surveillance, source reduction (i.e., physical control), source treatment (i.e., biological and chemical control), public education, and outreach. Each of these techniques could be applied to the applicable vectors under the IVMP, including:

- Disease-transmitting mosquitoes (i.e., *Culex* spp. and *Aedes* spp.);
- Nuisance mosquitoes (not disease-transmitting);
- Vectors associated with mammal disease and transmission (i.e., ticks and rodents);
- Other nuisance species (e.g., eye gnats) deemed necessary for control as approved by VCP officials.

Where applicable, the Proposed Project incorporates various vector management principles and techniques from guidance documents, such as the VCP's annual *Engineer's Report*, *West Nile Virus Strategic Response Plan*, and *Aedes Transmitted Disease Strategic Response Plan*. These guidance documents are attached to the published Initial Study.

The Proposed Project will also allow for inclusion of progressive and emerging vector control activities and materials. VCP staff is in communication with other regional vector control districts as well as State and Federal agencies to identify new vector-borne diseases and outbreaks, and to share eradication techniques. New vector control methods based on scientific evidence and expert guidance may be implemented to address public risks as they

¹ "Disease-transmitting vector" means "an animal capable of transmitting the causative agent of human disease." See, County Code Section 64.202(h).

arise. These emerging vector control strategies could include increased or advanced/early source prevention, reduction, surveillance, and/or physical/biological/chemical control, depending on the assessment of public health risk.

Specifically, the IVMP would include the following activities that will be evaluated for potential environmental impacts in the PEIR:

Surveillance

The VCP currently monitors approximately 1,500 mosquito-breeding sources throughout San Diego County, including such techniques as counting and testing mosquito batches (i.e., trapping), testing dead birds, monitoring/testing sentinel chickens, and conducting aerial reconnaissance to identify sources. Surveillance is also conducted for ticks (for tularemia or Lyme disease), and rodents (for plague or hantavirus). Also, routine and complaint-based inspections are conducted to assure the prevention and abatement of flies associated with Commercial Poultry Ranches. Lastly, as part of the VCP's surveillance technology, the Vector Disease and Diagnostics Laboratory (VDDL) was added in July 2010, in which scientists use state-of-the-art molecular tests to detect vector-borne pathogens in a wide variety of samples ranging from mosquitoes and ticks, to birds, rodents, and other animals.

Source Reduction (i.e., Physical Control)

The VCP directs and assists property owners to manage mosquito habitat (breeding sources) to reduce mosquito production. The physical control method primarily targets mosquitoes in their larval stage. This may include the removal of vegetation or sediment, interruption of water flow, rotation of stored water, pumping and/or filling sources, improving drainage and water circulation systems, and installing, improving, or removing culverts, tide gates, and other water control structures in wetlands. VCP staff direct property owners to coordinate water management efforts under the guidance of Federal and State regulatory agencies.

Source Treatment (i.e., Biological and Chemical Control)

Biological Control

Mosquito fish, *Gambusia affinis*, are one of the VCP's primary biological control agents used against mosquitoes. Mosquito fish are not native to California, but have been widely established in the state since the early 1920s and now inhabit most natural and constructed water bodies. Mosquito fish are made available to property owners to control mosquito production only in artificial containers such as ornamental fishponds, water plant barrels, horse troughs, and neglected green swimming pools.

The VCP also uses natural biological larvicides registered by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and other environmental agencies to control mosquito populations.

Chemical Control

Many mosquito-breeding sources cannot be entirely managed with physical or biological control measures, so the use of chemical applications may be required, which may include but is not limited to pesticides such as insecticides and herbicides. Specifically, chemical controls that eradicate or target mosquito eggs (or larvae) are referred to as larvicide, while adulticide is referenced when treating adult mosquitoes; both of which are forms of pesticides. Chemical controls can be applied in a variety of methods including manual (back-pack) hand-operated devices, truck-mounted applicators, or other motorized vehicles (e.g., aircraft, watercraft) to access remote locations. Regarding rodents, although the VCP retains the ability to use chemical controls, it primarily offers advice and assists property owners with their control efforts by providing inspections and consultations, as well as educational information for control measures focusing on exclusion and elimination.

Public Education and Outreach

Health education, outreach, and raising awareness about vectors are all integral parts of the IVMP. A proactive approach is used to educate people within the County about the risks of vectors and preventive measures they can take to protect themselves and their communities. To achieve this goal, VCP staff distribute educational materials such as brochures, pamphlets, bookmarks, and tip cards in multiple languages. Social media is used to notify the public of press releases and scheduled aerial larvicide treatments. The education campaign emphasizes prevention, protection, reporting, and behavior change. A similar proactive approach is used for educating the public about diseases transmitted by rats, ticks, mice, and fleas. Educational presentations, tabletop displays, and pamphlets are used and distributed to local communities.

It should be noted that the Board also adopted a Countywide Eye Gnat Program on December 5, 2012 (03) and associated Negative Declaration (Environmental Review No. 12-00-001) dated October 31, 2012. Therefore, the program is incorporated by reference into the Proposed Project but will not be included in the PEIR analysis since it was previously approved by the Board. In addition, on March 24, 2010 (04) the Board certified a PEIR for the Vector Habitat Remediation Program, which has offered competitive and direct grants to private and public organizations with the goal of implementing long-term solutions to eliminate or reduce mosquito-breeding habitat.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

An analysis of the environmental impacts is currently being conducted. As a result of implementation of the Proposed Project, there are potentially significant environmental effects that may occur to Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology & Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, Hydrology & Water Quality, Noise, and Tribal Cultural Resources. These issues, along with an analysis of project alternatives, cumulative effects, and potential for growth inducement, will be analyzed and discussed in the PEIR.

Figure 1 – IVMP Service Area Vicinity Map

