



SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

BUILDING STRONG®

DECISION TO ACCEPT FUNDS FROM Coachella Valley Water District

Public Notice No.: SPL-2013-324-TOB

Date: July 19, 2013

Corps Contact: Therese O. Bradford; Tel. 760-602-4850; Email: Therese.O.Bradford@usace.army.mil

The purpose of this Special Public Notice is to announce that the Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has decided to accept and expend funds contributed by the Coachella Valley Water District (District) under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Corps and the District. This is a new MOA between the Corps and the District that addresses the acceptance and expenditure of funds pursuant to Water Resources Development Act section 214. These funds would be used to increase Corps resources available to evaluate and process the District's Department of the Army (DA) permit applications. Though the District would continue to receive more expeditious reviews of their permit applications, the Corps would ensure that regulatory permit decision-making remains impartial and that all applicable procedural and substantive requirements of the DA permit application review process remain unchanged. The decision to accept funds is in response to the success of a similar MOA with the other local public agencies, the large number of DA permit applications that continue to be submitted by the District and the ongoing need to devote significant staff time to these applications to ensure the District and the public are best served throughout the permit evaluation process. The decision to enter into an agreement to accept funds does not constitute any endorsement or implied consent to District permit applications; rather, it enables Corps staff to devote the attention required to these applications, in a more timely and more thorough manner than they may otherwise be able to, benefiting the District and the public.

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander G. Deraney, Acting Commander and Acting District Engineer of the Los Angeles District Corps has determined that acceptance and expenditure of additional funds would be in accordance with section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000, Public Law 106-541), as amended. The Memorandum documenting his decision is attached. On May 3, 2013, the Los Angeles District circulated the initial Special Public Notice announcing our preliminary intent to accept and expend such funds, and stated that we had initiated funding discussions with the District. That Special Public Notice also discussed the types of activities for which funds would be expended, as well as the safeguarding procedures that would be used to ensure that the funds would not affect impartial decision-making processes. These procedures are listed here:

- All final permit decisions for cases where these funds are used must be reviewed at least one level above the normal decision-maker, unless the decision-maker is the District Commander. For example, if the decision-maker were the Regulatory Division Chief, then the decision-maker for that permit action would be raised to the District Engineer.
- All final permit decisions for cases where these funds are used will be made available on the Los Angeles District Regulatory Division web page.

- The Los Angeles District will not eliminate any procedures or evaluations that would otherwise be required for that type of project and permit application under consideration.
- The Los Angeles District must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Contributed District and County funds will not be expended for supervisory or management review of staff-generated permit decision recommendations. Also, funds would not be used for processing administrative appeals of any decisions on District and County permit applications. If District and County funds are used to hire contractors in support of the Corps permit evaluation process, such contractor products will be drafts only and be reviewed by Corps regulatory program employees, before they are utilized in support of any Corps permit decision.

Under the agreement, we will submit quarterly reports to the District and County itemizing the funds expended and ongoing and completed activities by project, anticipated activities by project and estimated expenditures in the next quarter, and opportunities for improved efficiency and coordination. Under existing agreements with other agencies, the final permit decisions to date, posted on our Regulatory Division's web page, have been reviewed and/or signed by the Regulatory Division's a Senior Project Manager or Chief who is at least one level higher than the Project Manager assigned to evaluate the District applications, or the District Commander. With other similar agreements, we have noted improved responsiveness, while maintaining product integrity, by having staff available to answer questions and to evaluate these applications, on both small projects and on large projects involving a more rigorous NEPA review. Implementation of the funding program will better serve the public interest through more cost-effective processing of permit applications, enhanced evaluation capability, and a streamlined permit processing system. Our capacity to evaluate permit applications from applicants not party to this funding agreement will not be adversely affected.

Copies of the relevant documents related to this decision to accept and expend District funds under this new MOA, as well as any permit decisions in the future, which were evaluated by Corps staff using other such funds, can be viewed at the Corps Regulatory Division web page at <http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx>.

For additional information, please call Therese O. Bradford of my staff at 760-602-4850 or via e-mail at Therese.O.Bradford@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 532711

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90053-2325

WWW.SPL.USACE.ARMY.MIL