

MONTEREY COUNTY

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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

**PROJECT TITLE: USDA APHIS-WS IWDM PROGRAM AND AGREEMENT RENEWAL
(State Clearinghouse No. 2017031003)**

PROJECT LOCATION: Monterey County

Notice is hereby given that the County of Monterey, as the lead agency, is seeking written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that evaluates the continued implementation of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service–Wildlife Services (APHIS-WS) Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) Program and Agreement Renewal in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 2100 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.). A summary of the project description and the potential environmental effects of the proposed project are presented below. The public review period will begin on August 17, 2017 and end on October 3, 2017. This review period is established for the purpose of receiving written comments on the accuracy and adequacy of the Draft EIR together with other information relative to the environmental effects of the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The current five-year Cooperative Service Agreement (CSA) between Monterey County and APHIS-WS expires on June 30, 2018. The proposed project is the renewal of the CSA, including annual work plans (work and financial plan) required by the five-year CSA, for another five years. The renewed contract would fund continuation of the existing APHIS-WS IWDM program in the county. Activities performed under the IWDM program would be implemented by APHIS-WS field specialists in accordance with the regulations, standards, and guidelines of the IWDM program. Identical to the current CSA, the County would not be materially involved in any of the wildlife damage management activities other than to cost-share the financial portion of the program. Neither APHIS-WS nor Monterey County is proposing any changes to the APHIS-WS IWDM program in Monterey County in conjunction with the County's renewal of the CSA.

Under the renewed contract, trained wildlife specialists from APHIS-WS would continue to offer technical advice/assistance to resource owners on prevention and/or control techniques; inform and educate the interested public on how to prevent and reduce wildlife damage on their own; investigate wildlife damage situations to determine the responsible species and evaluate the site for applicability of prevention and control methods; develop and implement wildlife damage management actions for the protection of agricultural resources, public health and safety, and property; respond to incidents where wildlife species are threatening public health and safety (in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and local law enforcement) including the use of out-of-county resources and expertise; and collect samples for



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wildlife diseases that may affect agriculture and public safety. Technical assistance would be provided only at the request of affected resource owners or managers. The majority of services would likely be provided for the protection of livestock and field crops on agricultural lands because that has historically resulted in the most requests for technical assistance, but technical assistance would also be available for the protection of public health and safety (human–animal conflicts) and property. All of the direct control methods that could be used by APHIS-WS field specialists under the CSA with the County would be implemented primarily on private land, with a limited amount of work in County-operated parks. Before wildlife damage management is conducted on private land in response to a request for assistance from a property or resource owner, an Agreement for Control must be signed by APHIS-WS and the landowner or representative.

LEAD AGENCY: County of Monterey

AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EIR: The Draft EIR is available on the Monterey County Office of the Agricultural Commissioner website at:

<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/agricultural-commissioner#ag>.

The Draft EIR is also available for review during normal business hours at the following locations:

Monterey County Office of the Agricultural Commissioner 1428 Abbott Street Salinas, CA 93901 (831) 759-7325	County of Monterey RMA-Planning 1441 Schilling Place, 2 nd Floor Salinas, CA 93901 (831) 755-5025	Monterey Public Library Central Library 625 Pacific Street Monterey, CA 93940 (831) 646-5669	Monterey County Free Library 402 Broadway Ave. King City, CA 93930 (831) 385-3677	Salinas Public Library 350 Lincoln Ave. Salinas, CA 93901 (831) 758-7311
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All documents referenced in the Draft EIR are available upon request by contacting Robert Roach, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, 1428 Abbott Street, Salinas, CA, (831) 759-7325, roachb@co.monterey.ca.us.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: August 17, 2017, through October 3, 2017

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: In February 2017, the County completed preparation of an Initial Study to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. Although the study found no significant environmental effects under CEQA review standards, the County conducted environmental review above and beyond what is required by CEQA. The result of this process is a voluntary, non-CEQA-mandated informational EIR that focuses on the potential biological resources impacts of implementing the proposed project. The Draft EIR did not identify any significant impacts.