INFORMATION HANDOUT

For Contract No. 04-4A3624
At 04-Nap,Sol-80,680-VAR

Identified by
Project ID 0414000179

CONCURRENCE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service replay to Caltrans proposal of replace MBGR with concrete barrier project.

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825-1846

In Reply Refer To:
08ESMF00-2013-I-0457-1

JUL 25 2013

Mr. Hardeep Takhar
California Department of Transportation
Environmental Division, MS-8E
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, California 94612

Subject: Informal Endangered Species Act Consultation on the Proposed San Mateo and Solano Counties Metal Beam Guard Rail Replacement Project, San Mateo and Solano Counties, California

Dear Mr. Takhar:

This is in response to the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) May 29, 2013, request for concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that the proposed San Mateo and Solano Counties Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) Replacement Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and the endangered San Francisco garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*). Your request was received in our office on June 3, 2013. Our response is based on the project information provided in your May 29, 2013, request package; the June 14, 2013, visit to representative MBGR replacement location 9; and additional project information included in June 28, 2013, and July 8, 2013, electronic mail (e-mail) messages. This letter is issued under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*)(Act).

To enhance highway safety, Caltrans is proposing to replace existing MBGR with a type 60 new concrete barrier at 12 locations within San Mateo and Solano Counties. According to Caltrans, the concrete barriers will reduce the exposure of their maintenance crews to traffic risk and decrease traffic delays due to maintenance lane closures. Caltrans has batched the 12 MBGR replacement actions into one informal section 7 consultation proposal because: (1) they are located within the Bay Area region; (2) have similar purpose, need, design, and construction methods; and (3) are derived from a shared budget allocation.

According to Caltrans' May 29, 2013, information package, the proposed MBGR replacement will be completed at the following locations:

Location #	County	State Route (SR)	Post Mile	Location	Approximate Length of Proposed Concrete Barrier (feet)
1	San Mateo	1	47.21	Northbound State route (SR) 1 from just north of Serramonte Blvd. on-ramp to the southbound SR 280 off-ramp	2,000
2	San Mateo	1	48.52	Southbound SR 1 from 19th Ave. to southbound SR 280 on right side above the John Daly tunnel (extend 250 feet to stop at call box SM 280-272T)	850
3	San Mateo	82	19.045	Northbound El Camino Real to westbound SR 380 on the left side (extend 50 feet to cover ditch).	450
4	San Mateo	101	11.06	Southbound SR 101 on-ramp from westbound Hillsdale Blvd. on right side	50
5	San Mateo	101	R20.7	Southbound North Access Road off-ramp outside curve on the left	960
6	San Mateo	280	23.0	Northbound SR 280, 0.5 mile south of Hickey off-ramp	2,000
7	San Mateo	280	26.1	Southbound SR 280 on Eastmoor off-ramp guardrail post embedded in concrete on left	700
8	Solano	80	6.9/7.6	Westbound Interstate (I) 80 west of American Canyon to Hunter Hill Rest Area on right side	3,400
9	Solano	80	13.14	Westbound I-80 connector ramp to southbound SR 680	600
10	Solano	80	17.1	Eastbound SR 80 from West Texas St. under crossing to West Fairfield St. undercrossing	681
11	Solano	80	17.93	Westbound SR 80 on-ramp from Travis Blvd. right side of ramp circling under structure	120
12	Solano	680	12.79	Northbound SR 680 to eastbound 80 transition ramp	1,060
Total					**12,871**

At each of the proposed sites, the new concrete barriers will be placed in the same location as the existing MBGR. Following removal of the MBGR, a trench will be excavated to provide a foundation for the concrete barrier. The work will be staged on the roadway and will require lane closure. The area needed for work will be limited to within 5 feet from the edge of the existing paved road shoulder. All activities will take place within the existing road right-of-way. Work in some locations may take up to 20 days and work on the entire project is expected to be completed within 120 days.

Each of the 12 proposed sites are located within multi-lane highways with high traffic volumes and are adjacent to various levels of disturbance and land use types.

Location 7 is surrounded by urban growth. Locations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, and 12 are located adjacent to narrow bands of landscaping surrounded by roadways and urban development. The California red-legged frog and San Francisco garter snake are unlikely to occur in these 9 areas because the adjacent landscaped areas are: (1) isolated by surrounding roads and urbanization; (2) small; and (3) lack the aquatic habitat features or sufficient connectivity to those aquatic features that are associated with the life history of the listed frog and snake.

Location 5 is within an urban area but is adjacent to a wider band of roadside habitat where wildlife may occur. Locations 8 and 9 are not in urbanized areas and are adjacent to open habitat. Location 5 is within the range of the California red-legged frog and the San Francisco garter snake, and Locations 8 and 9 are located within the current range of the California red-legged frog. The listed frog and snake may occur within the vicinities of these three proposed work locations, however, the Service concludes that the described action is unlikely to adversely affect the California red-legged frog or the San Francisco garter snake because the proposed ground disturbing activities will be located within a previously disturbed area with compacted soil and sparse vegetation that is subject to regular maintenance activities. Caltrans has also proposed to implement the following conservation measures at Locations 5, 8, and 9.

1. Work will be conducted between April 15 and October 15 to avoid rain events and other seasonal conditions that are more conducive to California red-legged frog and San Francisco garter snake movement and dispersal.

2. A Service–approved biologist will conduct a preconstruction survey immediately prior to initial groundbreaking.

3. Construction activity will cease if a listed species is encountered within the work area. The biological monitor will contact the Service to discuss what measures need to take place prior to resumption of construction activities.

4. Excavations that are 1-foot deep or greater will be backfilled at the end of each work day.

5. Caltrans will implement a storm water pollution prevention plan for these 3 locations.

6. High–visibility construction fencing will be installed to clearly delineate the boundaries of the work area.

Unless new information reveals effects of the proposed project that may affect listed species in a manner or to an extent not considered; or the project is modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species that was not considered; or a new species or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by the proposed action, no further action pursuant to the Act, is necessary.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this response for the proposed San Mateo and Solano Counties MBGR Project, please contact John Cleckler, Caltrans Liaison (*john_cleckler@fws.gov*) or Ryan Olah, Coast-Bay/Forest Foothills Division Chief (*ryan_olah@fws.gov*), at the letterhead address, (916) 414-6600, or by electronic mail.

Sincerely,

for Eric Tattersall
Deputy Assistant Field Supervisor

cc:
Melissa Escaron, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Napa, California
Stuart Kirkham and Lindsay Vivian, Caltrans District 04, Oakland, California