



File Code: 2710
Date: September 18, 2015

The Angeles National Forest ("ANF") received an application on September 8, 2015, from the California High Speed Rail Authority ("HSRA") to perform a geophysical/ geotechnical investigation ("GI") to determine the feasibility of several high speed rail tunnel alignment alternatives that the HSRA is considering through the Angeles National Forest ("ANF").

The GI would consist of drilling, installing, testing, and backfilling borings at five to eight locations. The drilling depth would vary from approximately 900 to 2500 feet below ground surface. To avoid or minimize their effect on existing resources, these borings will be located along existing roads on the ANF. The GI will provide data to help evaluate potentially challenging conditions for tunnel design and construction by investigating groundwater, adverse geology and faults. The resulting information will also help the understanding of local water conditions and earthquake faults. The HSRA has proposed the following mitigation measures to minimize adverse effects of their investigation on groundwater aquifers and their surface expressions:

- Maintain drilling mud pressure to prevent groundwater from flowing into the borings.
- Establish trigger points to indicate when drilling mud pressure is about to be lost.
- If drilling mud pressure is lost, cement grout the boring from the bottom up to stop any water flow into the boring, then re-rill through the cement plug after it has cured.
- HSRA calculated that their drilling activities would not affect groundwater beyond approximately 1000 feet of each drilling location.

The ANF is proposing to process this GI application under a NEPA Categorical Exclusion (short term geophysical study), and hereby seeks public comments. The ANF is aware of the public interest regarding any high speed rail alignment through the ANF. For now, the ANF is seeking comments only on the GI/ feasibility study, not for the selection or construction of any alignment on the Angeles NF; Comments unrelated to the GI/ feasibility study will not be considered. Approval of this application for GI/ feasibility study does not constitute ANF approval or endorsement of any HSR alignment alternative on or off Forest.

If authorized to proceed, the HSRA would obtain required County permits to drill then backfill the proposed borings, and will perform all work according to State and County regulations for drilling drinking water wells.

A complete project description is available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/angeles/>. Please send comments to Angeles National Forest, Attention: George Farra, 701 N. Santa Anita Ave, Arcadia, CA 91006, gfarra@fs.fed.us ("HSRA GI" in the subject box), (626) 574-5301 on or before October 23, 2015.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY VAIL
Forest Supervisor

