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April 15, 2023

Ms. Terry Ash  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Real Estate Division, Project Management and Development  
California Department of General Services  
2635 North First Street, Suite 149  
San Jose, CA 95134

**SUBJECT: Southern Region Emergency Operations Center Project – Notice of Preparation/Notice of Public Scoping Meeting – Public Comment Letter**

Dear Ms. Ash:

I am writing to provide comments on the environmental review process for the proposed Southern Region Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Project at the Fairview Developmental Center (FDC) in Costa Mesa, CA.

The proposed project is located on an approximately 15-acre site within the FDC property. It consists of several building and structures that would provide emergency management planning and training programs for 11 counties within two mutual aid regions.

In the Legislature, I secured a policy provision in the state budget to authorize the Department of General Services (DGS) to enter into an agreement with the City of Costa Mesa to develop a specific plan for the FDC property and manage the land use planning process integrated with a disposition process for the property, to be carried out by DGS. DGS was also authorized to transfer a portion of state property within the FDC property to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) for constructing an emergency management center.

### Public Scoping Comments

1. General Comments: I am concerned that the proposed project site has increased from 9 acres to at least 15 acres, **creating more challenges for future planning of the overall property.** Instead of carving out this project site, we should incorporate it into master planning by the City of Costa Mesa for the whole property, including utilities, roadways, and ingress and egress.
2. General Comments: I am requesting DGS to hold (2) community meetings with DGS, OES and consultants on the draft EIR once it becomes available to the public for review and comment.

3. **Helipad: I urge DGS and OES to reconsider the helipad on the proposed project site** for the following reasons:
- The proposed helipad and setback requirements are resulting in the expansion of acreage for the project site and creating incompatibility with future housing on the FDC property, as well as issues for existing neighbors to the west and south of the property.
  - The Costa Mesa Police Department Heliport (active status) is located approximately 1.5 miles from the proposed project site on Fair Drive, a local arterial that ends into the FDC property. The Costa Mesa PD Heliport could serve as an alternative for emergency helicopter operations that is within close proximity to the proposed Southern Region Emergency Operations Center. Our office has already initiated a conversation with the Costa Mesa Police Chief, who has expressed interest in allowing use of the heliport for OES emergency activity.
  - The OC Fair & Event Center is located approximately 1.5 miles from the proposed project site on Fair Drive and includes ample open parking area to accommodate emergency helicopter landings.
  - The OES State Operations Center in the City of Mather does not include a helipad and is located in close proximity to Mather Airport.
  - John Wayne Airport (SNA) is located within close proximity to the FDC property (~4 miles) with existing helicopter operations.
  - Reconsideration of the helipad could open more acreage to non-OES development, including public open space.
4. **Site Plan: The proposed EOC lattice (radio) tower should be located in an area on the property farthest from adjoining parcels** within the FDC property and no closer to existing apartments to the west on Joann Street. DGS must consider the lattice tower height, low-rise buildings and structures and setbacks, to **ensure compatibility with future housing development on the property. In alignment with state and local housing goals, we must preserve as much acreage for housing development.**

Thank you for considering my comments and recommendations. I look forward to ongoing updates from DGS and OES related to the project. If you have any questions, please contact my District Director, Michael Tou, at (949) 251-0074 or [michael.tou@asm.ca.gov](mailto:michael.tou@asm.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Cottie Petrie-Norris  
Assemblymember, 73<sup>rd</sup> District

cc: Mayor John Stephens and Costa Mesa City Council Members  
Lori Ann Farrell Harrison, City Manager, City of Costa Mesa  
Jennifer Le, Director of Economic and Development Services, City of Costa Mesa  
Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director, City of Costa Mesa  
Ronald Lawrence, Chief, Costa Mesa Police Department  
Dan Stefano, Chief, Costa Mesa Fire Department