

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S.1 Project Setting

The Van Nuys Airport Noisier Aircraft Phaseout Project (project) proposes changes in airplane operations at the Van Nuys Airport (VNY), which is located in a developed area in the western end of the San Fernando Valley, within the northwestern portion of the City of Los Angeles. Changes proposed at VNY as part of the project would also affect operations (i.e., takeoffs and landings) at five other airports in the region: Bob Hope Airport (BUR) in the City of Burbank, Los Angeles County; Camarillo Airport (CMA) in the City of Camarillo, Ventura County; Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on the western edge of the City of Los Angeles; Chino Airport (CNO) near the City of Chino, western San Bernardino County; and William J. Fox Airfield (WJF) near the City of Lancaster, northern Los Angeles County.

S.2 Project Summary & Alternatives

The project would establish noise limits at VNY, prohibiting operations by aircraft that exceed specified takeoff noise levels, according to a four-phase program implemented between 2009 and 2016. The noise limits would reduce aircraft operations at VNY and, in turn, would lead to a minimal increase in operations at five identified “diversion” airports—airports located in the regional vicinity of VNY to where aircraft no longer able to operate at VNY are anticipated to shift. The project proposes no physical development or change in land use at any of the affected airports.

The phased reduction in maximum takeoff noise levels at VNY would occur as follows:

- On or after January 1, 2009: No aircraft may arrive or depart VNY whose takeoff noise level equals or exceeds 85A-weighted decibels (dBA).
- On or after January 1, 2011: No aircraft may arrive or depart VNY whose takeoff noise level equals or exceeds 83 dBA.
- On or after January 1, 2014: No aircraft may arrive or depart VNY whose takeoff noise level equals or exceeds 80 dBA.
- On or after January 1, 2016: No aircraft may arrive or depart VNY whose takeoff noise level equals or exceeds 77 dBA.

Military, government, medical, and emergency operations would not be subject to the project's aircraft noise limits. The project also includes exemptions for aircraft that are permanently departing VNY, for aircraft types first flown before 1950, for historic former military aircraft that are now privately owned, and for operations related to major maintenance and repairs. The latter two exemptions would expire in 2016.

LAWA predicts that some of the aircraft affected by the project's proposed phaseout would be retired and taken out of service following the adoption of the ordinance, some would be modified with "hushkits" that reduce aircraft noise, and others would continue operating at other Southern California regional airports. Five airports in the region were identified as the most likely to receive the diverted VNY traffic: BUR, LAX, CMA, CNO, and WJF.

In addition to the project and the No Project Alternative (Alternative 1), under which the proposed phaseout program would not be implemented, the EIR considers the environmental effects of one project alternative. Alternative 2 is the Phaseout with Stage 3 and Stage 4 Exemptions Alternative, under which a phaseout program similar to that of the project would be implemented, but also including an additional exemption for Stage 3 and Stage 4 aircraft. The Alternative 2 ordinance would be slightly less restrictive than the project, leading to fewer aircraft operations being diverted from VNY. All of the aircraft operations affected by the Alternative 2 exemptions, an estimated 32 annual operations during the 2014 planning year, are anticipated to operate at LAX under the proposed project, but would remain at VNY under Alternative 2.

S.3 Summary of Known Areas of Controversy

Prior to conducting the analysis for this EIR, a Notice of Preparation was prepared and submitted for a 30-day public review period. A total of 12 written comment letters were received during the review period. Though many comments were supportive of the project's efforts to reduce noise in the vicinity of VNY, some parties expressed concern over the air quality and noise impacts the project could produce at diversion airports. In addition, the primary areas of controversy arising during the NOP scoping period are non-CEQA-related suggestions that the project conflicts with policy of the Federal Aviation Administration and is contrary to the interests of the business aviation community.

S.4 Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This EIR identifies significant project-level and cumulative air quality impacts. These impacts result from increasing aircraft operations at certain diversion airports, which would increase pollutant emissions in their respective locations. There is no feasible mitigation to reduce these significant impacts to less-than-significant levels, and significant and unmitigated impacts are identified. The project and alternatives would result in noise increases at the five diversion airports, but no significant noise impacts are identified for the project or either of the alternatives.

Because the project does not propose or require any development or other physical modification at VNY or the diversion airports, most of the environmental issue areas typically evaluated as part of the CEQA process are not applicable to this project and have not been analyzed in detail in this Draft EIR, in accordance with Section 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The following environmental issue areas were eliminated from detailed consideration in this Draft EIR: aesthetics, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities/service systems. As explained in Section 4.1, the project would not result in significant impacts on any of these issue areas.

S.4.1 Significant Project-Level Air Quality Impacts

The modeling analysis performed for the project indicates that project-related increases in aircraft operations at CMA would result in air pollutant emissions at that location that exceed the daily thresholds of the Ventura County Air Quality Management District. Emissions that are exceeded are volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen. Because the relevant thresholds are exceeded, a significant impact was identified at this airport.

S.4.1.1 Mitigation Measures and the Effect of Alternatives

There are no feasible mitigation measures to avoid or substantially lessen this air quality impact.

Alternative 1 (No Project) would avoid this significant impact by avoiding the project-related increase of emissions at CMA. Alternative 2 would not affect the project's shift of emissions to CMA, and this significant impact would result at CMA under Alternative 2.

S.4.2 Significant Cumulative Air Quality Impacts

The project-level impact noted above is also identified as a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact. The project also results in considerable contributions to significant cumulative impacts because it would transfer emissions from the South Coast Air Basin to two other air basins that are in non-attainment of certain pollutants. The Mojave Desert Air Basin and the South Central Coast Air Basin are both in non-attainment of ozone and particulate-matter standards. The project would transfer emissions of particulate matter and ozone precursors (i.e., volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen) from the South Coast Air Basin to these two neighboring basins. This would combine with future anticipated increases of these gases within the respective regions and contribute to the basins' continued non-attainment status.

S.4.2.1 Mitigation Measures and the Effect of Alternatives

There are no feasible mitigation measures to avoid or substantially lessen the project's contribution to these cumulative air quality impacts.

Alternative 1 (No Project) would avoid these significant contributions to air quality impacts by avoiding the project-related increase of emissions to the Mojave Desert Air Basin and the South Central Coast Air Basin, and by avoiding emissions increases at CMA. Alternative 2 (Phaseout with Stage 3 and Stage 4 Exemptions) would not affect the project's shift of emissions to the basins; therefore, these significant cumulative impacts would occur with implementation of Alternative 2.

The significant impacts and mitigation measures associated with the project and alternatives are summarized in Table S-1.

Table S-1. Summary Matrix of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures Associated with the Project and Alternatives

Significant Impact	Alternative	Level of Significance without Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
<p>AQ-1: Exceedance of Ventura County Air Quality Management District Daily Emissions Thresholds at CMA</p> <p>The project would result in emissions of volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen at Camarillo Airport in excess of Ventura County Air Quality Management District daily thresholds.</p>	Proposed Project	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
	Alternative 1	No Impact	N/A	N/A
	Alternative 2	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
<p>CAQ-1: New cumulatively considerable contribution of air pollutants to the Mojave Desert Air Basin</p> <p>The project would add emissions of ozone precursors (volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen) and particulate matter to the Mojave Desert Air Basin, which is in non-attainment status for ozone and particulate matter.</p>	Proposed Project	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
	Alternative 1	No Impact	N/A	N/A
	Alternative 2	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
<p>CAQ-2: New cumulatively considerable contribution of air pollutants to the South Central Coast Air Basin</p> <p>The project would add emissions of ozone precursors (volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen) and particulate matter to the South Central Coast Air Basin, which is in non-attainment status for ozone and particulate matter.</p>	Proposed Project	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
	Alternative 1	No Impact	N/A	N/A
	Alternative 2	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant

Significant Impact	Alternative	Level of Significance without Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
CAQ-3: Cumulatively Considerable Emissions at CMA, causing exceedance of Ventura County Air Pollution Control District Thresholds The project would result in emissions of volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen at Camarillo Airport in excess of Ventura County Air Quality Management District daily thresholds, thereby presenting a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts in the South Central Coast Air Basin.	Proposed Project	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant
	Alternative 1	No Impact	N/A	N/A
	Alternative 2	Significant	There is no feasible mitigation that would avoid or substantially lessen this impact.	Significant