In 2016, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Medical Cannabis Cultivation Program and began developing regulations for statewide medical cannabis cultivation licensing and a track-and-trace system. With passage of the Adult Use of Marijuana Act in November 2016, CDFA expanded its program to include adult-use (nonmedical) cannabis cultivation activities. The collective statewide licensing program is now called CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing.

A revised NOP was released on April 27, 2017, to provide information about the expanded program and its potential environmental impacts. The release of the revised NOP triggers a 30-day comment period in order to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide input on the environmental issues that should be considered in the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), associated mitigation measures, and alternatives.

The overall purpose of statewide CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing is to ensure cannabis cultivation is performed in a manner that protects the environment, cannabis cultivation workers, and the general public from the individual and cumulative effects of these operations, and fully complies with all applicable laws. An additional purpose of the program is to establish a track-and-trace system to ensure the movement of cannabis items are tracked throughout the production chain.

CDFA is preparing a PEIR to provide information about the potential environmental effects associated with the adoption and implementation of statewide cannabis cultivation regulations. The PEIR will be prepared and circulated for public review by CDFA in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CDFA will serve as the lead agency pursuant to CEQA and will consider public comments regarding the scope and content of the information to be included in the PEIR.

Public and agency comments on the revised NOP and the current scope of CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing are a critical part of the environmental review process. Comments are due by May 26, 2017.

The Revised NOP can be viewed online at calcannabis.cdfa.ca.gov.