January 4, 2010

Mr. Chris Erias  
City of Galt Planning Department  
495 Industrial Drive  
Galt, CA  95632

Walmart Draft Environmental Impact Report, AQMD# SAC200701178d

Dear Mr. Erias:

Thank you for providing the Walmart Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) for review. Staff comments follow.

1. This project has the opportunity to fulfill local shopping and employment needs to Galt residents which should result in reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The addition of good pedestrian and bicycle access routes from Walmart to the surrounding neighborhoods also has the potential to reduce vehicle trips. Reducing VMT and vehicle trips contribute to local and regional air quality improvements.

2. To encourage bicycle trips to Walmart, the 20 required bicycle parking spaces should be the most user friendly design, protected from inclement weather, and secure. (Figure 3-3, chapter 3, page 5; chapter 5, page 35) Additionally, Walmart should consider providing locked or indoor bicycle parking/storage for employees separate from the outdoor customer bicycle parking to encourage employees to bike to work, enhancing Walmart’s commitment to reduce GHG emissions. (chapter 5.4, Table 5.4-12, page 43)

3. To encourage use of transit, Walmart should work with the City of Galt and South County Transit to either improve the existing transit stop along Fermoy Way or provide a designated area on-site that offers transit users a convenient stop with protection from inclement weather. (chapter 5.3, page 35)

4. Concluding that the project won’t increase demand for public transit because the project is consistent with the general plan land use designation needs to be explained further. Will the current Dial-A-Ride transit service be adequate once Walmart is built and through 2030? Currently the Dial-A-Ride service isn’t operated on Sundays or holidays, which are certainly popular shopping days. Does the City of Galt have a transit plan that addresses the increase in demand that is certain to come with additional employment and retail development such as Walmart? (chapter 5.3, page 35)

5. Please clarify that the less than significant impact determination for Impact 5.4-8, related to the obstruction of implementation of an applicable air quality plan, is not solely based on the project being consistent with the general plan and mitigation measures in its EIR, but also consistent with the land use assumptions in the 2009 Sacramento Area 8-Hour Ozone Attainment Plan. (chapter 5.4, page 34)
6. GHG emission reductions resulting from the inclusion of project design features need to be quantified. Quantification of these features discloses the degree to which the impact from the project is reduced and more importantly sets a performance standard for the project if design features or technologies change between now and the time the project is built. (chapter 5.4, page 37)

7. The project design features (or equivalent emission reduction technologies) that will be implemented to reduce GHG emissions from the project need to be included as either a condition of approval or a mitigation measure for the project to ensure emission reductions occur when the project is built. (chapter 5.4, page 37)

Your consideration of these comments is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at 916-874-4881 or khuss@airquality.org.

Sincerely,

Karen Huss
Associate Air Quality Planner/Analyst

Cc:  Mr. Larry Robinson, SMAQMD
     Mr. Gregg Halladay, City of Galt Public Works
     Ms. Kimberlie Dooley, South County Transit
     Mr. Dan Klinker, SACDOT