

To: X Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

X County Clerk
County of Kern
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

X County Clerk
County of Merced
2222 M St.
Merced, CA 95340

Lead Agency/Applicant Name:

Semitropic Water Storage District

1101 Central Ave., Wasco CA 93280-0877

Telephone #661-758-5113

(Address)

Project Title: Following Transfer Agreement, 2019 Calendar Year

Project Location – County: Kern; Merced

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The purpose of the Project is for Semitropic Water Storage District (District) to enter into an agreement with the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors and various of its members (collectively, the Authority) for transfer of up to approximately 5,000 acre-feet of Exchange Contract/CVP water available to the Authority for transfer to the District through its Water Transfer Program as a result of conservation, e.g., fallowing/crop idling activities. The point of delivery of the transfer water from the Authority to the District will be at San Luis Reservoir in Merced County, and the transfer water would be delivered to the District in Kern County through and to turnouts off the California Aqueduct. The District would take delivery of the water when available for transfer in 2019. The Project would use existing water facilities and not involve any construction. Beneficiaries of the Project are landowners and water users within the boundaries of the District.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Lead Agency: Semitropic Water Storage District.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Lead Agency: Semitropic Water Storage District; San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

Exempt Status:

Categorical Exemption. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301.

Statutory Exemptions. Water Code, Section 1729.

The "common sense" exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3).

Reasons why project is exempt: The District has determined that the Project is exempt under CEQA. This determination is based upon the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have a potential for causing significant environmental impacts, and that where (as here) it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The District has determined the Project has no possibility for significant effect on the environment because, (i) the Project will use

existing facilities and would not require any construction or grading, (ii) the Project does not create, require or constitute a new permanent source of water supply, and will not result in any growth inducing or cumulative environmental impacts, (iii) there will be no land use changes as a result of the Project, and (iv) no new lands will be brought into production as a consequence of transfer water deliveries. Additionally, the District has determined that delivery of the transfer water will utilize the operation of existing facilities, and there will be no expansion of use beyond that existing as of the date of this Agreement. Therefore, based on the foregoing, the Class 1 existing facilities exemption (CEQA Guidelines section 15301), and the common sense exemption apply (CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3)). Moreover, water transfers occurring for a period of one year or less are statutorily exempt from CEQA (Water Code section 1729). Finally, project activities, including fallowing and transfer of the subject water to South of Delta water users, including users within the service area of the Kern County Water Agency, are covered by other environmental documents including an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Water Transfer Program (State Clearinghouse #2011061057) certified by the Authority on March 1, 2013, and a Record of Decision for the Water Transfer Program for the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, 2014-2038, approved by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on or about July 24, 2013.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Jason Gianquinto, General Manager
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (661) 758-5113

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____

Date: 3/19/2019 Title: General Manager

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR:

Signed by Applicant