

## Notice of Exemption

**To:**

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

County Clerk  
County of Ventura

**From:**

State of California Department of Water  
Resources  
770 Fairmont Ave, Suite 200  
Glendale, CA 91203-1035

**Project Title:** Ventura River Stream Gage Bubbler Installation and Operation Project

**Project Applicant:** State of California Department of Water Resources

**Project Location - Specific:**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) proposes to install a stream gaging station on Ventura River just upstream of Santa Ana Boulevard bridge near the City of Oak View in Ventura County. The proposed project location is within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' quadrangle Matilija, Public Land Survey System Township T3N Range R24W, and the latitude and longitude is 34°24'09.7"N 119°18'23.7"W.

The Ventura River flows 16.2 miles from its headwaters at the foot of Nordhoff Ridge in Los Padres National Forest, past Rice Canyon, and continues southwest to its estuary near Ventura State Beach. Its main tributaries are North Matilija Creek and Matilija Creek, Coyote Creek, San Antonio Creek and Cañada Larga Creek. Many parts of Ventura River, including the proposed project site, are dry for most of the year.

The proposed gaging station would be installed between the access road on top of the levee and the Ventura River, starting from existing infrastructure south of the access road, running down the riprap of the streambank, and partially across the streambed.

**Projection Location – City:** Oak View

**Project Location – County:** Ventura

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** Under the hydrological data collection objective of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) proposes to deploy a network of stream gages in high and medium priority groundwater basins to reduce data gaps in the existing stream gage network. The enhanced network would provide essential data to improve water management- including groundwater recharge and to protect fish and wildlife. This proposed project would install a stream gage on Ventura River in the medium priority Upper Ventura Basin (4-003.01).

The proposed project consists of installation of a NEMA Box, which houses the Data Collection Platform (DCP) to store/transmit the data, solar panels and electrical components to power the station, the conduit which contains the bubbler line and sensor and a gas purge bubbler that generates a steady

pressure of air through the bubbler line that is used to calculate the stream height when surface water is flowing. The conduit would be buried in a 0.5' x 0.5' trench that runs from the NEMA box approximately 2' to 5' directly towards the bank of Ventura River. The trench stops where it meets the slope of the streambank, from where the conduit would daylight and run parallel to the slope of the streambank. The conduit would lay on top of the existing riprap protecting the streambank, secured in place by 0.5" diameter U-shaped rebar anchors. The conduit would meet the streambed, and extend less than 1' across into the streambed to its endpoint.

The installation would take no more than a few days, would take place mostly on existing developed portions of the drainage, would be minimally intrusive, and would result in minimal impact to habitats, wildlife, and or to the waters of the State or the US. Handheld power tools would be used to dig the 0.5' x 0.5' trench for the conduit, and concrete would be used backfill the trench.

After installation, staff would visit the site after storm events to take depth and flow measurements necessary to develop a rating curve. DWR staff would operate and maintain the gaging station, visiting the site for routine maintenance and repairs and to download data manually for verification purposes, up to six times in a year. The data collected from the station will be available publicly through the California Data Exchange (CDEC) and the Water Data Library and shared with local agency partners if requested.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** State of California Department of Water Resources

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** State of California Department of Water Resources

**Exempt Status:** Categorical Exemption. 15306. Information Collection

**Reason why project is exempt:** Most of the proposed activities would take place on developed portions of the drainage. The conduit may lay across a mixture of invasive *Bromes* and *Arundo Donax* as well as some typical wetland/riparian plants like *Baccharis salicifolia* (Mulefat) in the streambed, but no existing native vegetation would be removed. The installation of the stream gage would not significantly disturb the local ecology. No heavy equipment would be utilized, and ground disturbance would be minimal. The proposed construction activities would take place outside of nesting season (February 15 to September 15) to mitigate impact to the local and migratory bird population. Impacts to plants, wildlife, or cultural resources would be minimal. There would be minimal impact to the streambed and streambank in the Ventura River. Therefore, no environmental regulatory permits would be required.

A list of special status plant and wildlife species with the potential to occur within the project area has been compiled based on a literature search and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Field surveys were conducted to identify potential biological resources within the project vicinity.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Potential to occur
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 10</i>	Steelhead Trout	Endangered	None	Very unlikely. Stream gage would not affect migration.
<i>Bombus crotchii</i>	Crotch Bumble Bee	None	Candidate - Endangered	Moderate. Construction activities would occur away from nesting sites and avoid impact to flowering vegetation.
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	Delisted	Endangered	None.
<i>Rana boylei</i>	Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog	None	Endangered	None. Streamflow is not perennial at this site.
<i>Rana draytonii</i>	California Red-Legged Frog	Threatened	None	None. Streamflow is not perennial at this site.
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	Least Bell's Vireo	Endangered	Endangered	Unlikely. No nesting areas and project site is near residential area and noise is a deterrent.

Best Management Practices:

1. No native vegetation would be removed as part of the project.
2. No heavy equipment would be used as part of the proposed activities
3. No streambed disturbance would occur within the Ventura River.
4. Proposed construction activities would take place outside of nesting season (February 15 to September 15).
5. Any invasive species material that is removed would be properly disposed

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Albert Lu

**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** (818) 549-2330

**If filed by applicant:**

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

**Signature:** Thang (Vic) Nguyen **Date:** 10/12/2020 **Title:** Chief, So. Region Office, DWR

Signed by Lead Agency  Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

**Governor's Office of Planning & Research**

Authority Cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

**Oct 12 2020**

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**