

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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

From: (Public Agency): La Puente Valley County Water District
112 N. First Street
La Puente, CA 91744
(Address)

Project Title: Groundwater Nitrate Treatment System

Project Applicant: La Puente Valley County Water District

Project Location - Specific:
1695 Puente Avenue, Baldwin Park, CA 91706. Cross street (SW): Francisquito Ave.

Project Location - City: Baldwin Park Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
LPVCWD extracts and treats groundwater at the facility and delivers it to the community as potable water. LPVCWD has decided to add a treatment process at the facility to mitigate increasing concentrations of nitrate in the groundwater that are approaching the maximum allowable level for potable water. The project will add an ion exchange treatment process to the existing facility, to remove nitrate from the extracted groundwater. Beneficiaries will include the potable water customers of LPVCWD.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: La Puente Valley County Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: La Puente Valley County Water District

- Exempt Status: (check one):
[] Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
[] Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
[] Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
[X] Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 1, Article 19, Section 15061 (b)(2), Section 15301(b)
[] Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:
The Project is considered exempt pursuant to Section 15301(b): The Project is at an existing facility, the new ion exchange process will be incorporated inside an existing industrial building with limited to no external changes to the property, and will be used to treat groundwater to potable water standards with respect to nitrate.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Roy Frausto Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 626-330-2126

- 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 [X]

Signature: [Signature] Date: 11-2-2020 Title: GENERAL MANAGER

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date Received for filing at OPR:
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Henry P. Hernandez
President

David Hastings
Vice President

Cesar J. Barajas
Director



John P. Escalera
Director

William R. Rojas
Director

Roy Frausto
General Manager

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(626) 330-2126 – Fax (626) 330-2679
www.lapuentewater.com

November 2, 2020

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This letter serves to confirm that the La Puente Valley County Water District Board of Directors approved a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the District's Nitrate Treatment Project to be constructed at the District's treatment facility during the regular Board of Directors meeting on October 26, 2020. Minutes of the meeting will be available on or after November 9, 2020.

If you have any questions on this matter, please feel free to contact me at (626) 330-2126.

Sincerely,

Roy Frausto
General Manager/Board Secretary
La Puente Valley County Water District

STAFF REPORT



Meeting Date: October 26, 2020
To: Honorable Board of Directors
Subject: Consideration to File a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the District's Groundwater Nitrate Treatment System Project.

Purpose - *File a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the construction of the Nitrate Treatment System located at the District Groundwater Treatment Facility.*

Recommendation - *Approve and direct staff to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the District's Nitrate Treatment System Project on the basis of the categorical exemption permitted under 14 CCR Section 15301(b).*

Fiscal Impact - *The District's 2020 Capital Budget appropriates \$1,130,000 for the Nitrate Treatment System Project. The year to date expenditures for this project are \$103,287. The fees for filing the proposed Notice of Exemption will have very minimal impact on the project budget.*

Previous Related Action - *July 22, 2019 - the Board approved the Project Justification and Description for the Nitrate Treatment System Project. Board also authorized the General Manager to proceed with the evaluation of potential Nitrate-Nitrogen concentrations at the District's Wellfield, as Proposed by Stetson Engineer's Inc.*
September 16, 2020 - The Board authorized the General Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Geosyntec Consultants (Geosyntec) for the preparation of a technical memorandum to evaluate groundwater treatment systems for Nitrate removal.
November 12, 2020 - The Board approved a Nitrate Funding Agreement with the Cooperating Respondents for funding of Nitrate treatment at the District's Groundwater Treatment Facility.
March 9, 2020 - The Board approved a proposal from Evoqua Water Technologies LLC for the design of the Nitrate Removal Ion Exchange Treatment System.
May 11, 2020 - The Board authorized the General Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Geosyntec Consultants (Geosyntec) for engineering and permitting support services for the Nitrate Treatment System Project.

Background

During Summer of 2018, the District's Nitrate levels at the District's wellfield where on an abnormal increasing trend that resulted in average treated water near 80% of the 10 mg/l Maximum

Contaminant Level (MCL) for Nitrate. The District formally advised (through a memorandum) Suburban Water Systems (SWS) and the BPOU stakeholders on August 31, 2018, that treated water from the District's Treatment Facility may continue to be at or slightly above 8 mg/l. In response to the District's memorandum, SWS sent a letter on September 12, 2018, to the BPOU Distribution list advising that they would not accept water that exceeds 80% of the MCL from District's Groundwater Treatment Facility. At that time, basin levels in the Main San Gabriel Basin were at an all-time low.

Since last year, the District has made some progress on addressing the Nitrate issue by moving forward a Nitrate Treatment System Project. The work completed thus far to move the project forward are as follows:

- Completed a project description and justification memorandum.
- Completed a technical memorandum on potential Nitrate-Nitrogen concentrations at the District's Wellfield, which provides support that the levels are anticipated to continue to increase over time.
- Entered into a Nitrate Treatment Funding Agreement with the Cooperating Respondents that provides some funding toward the capital and operations costs through May 2027.
- Completed a technical memorandum that evaluated groundwater treatment systems for Nitrate removal and recommended the preferred system that would best meet the District's needs.
- Secured a \$3,000,000 loan to fund the District's Recycled Water System Project and to partially fund the Nitrate Treatment System Project.
- Completed the design of the Nitrate Treatment System (Evoqua system components only).
- Entered into a professional services agreement with Geosyntec Consultants (Geosyntec) for engineering and permitting support services for the project.

Summary

Before the District can move to the construction phase of the project and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the District, acting as the Lead Agency, must assess the projects impact to the environment. Now that the District has completed the preliminary design of the Nitrate Treatment System and staff fully understands the nature of the work that will need to be completed for the project, with assistance from Geosyntec, staff has concluded that the District's Nitrate Treatment System Project shall be categorical exemption as permitted under 14 CCR Section 15301(b).

Fiscal Impact

The District's 2020 Capital Budget appropriates \$1,130,000 for the Nitrate Treatment System Project. The year to date expenditures for this project are \$103,287. The fees for filing the proposed Notice of Exemption will have very minimal impact on the project budget.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board of Directors approve the CEQA Notice of Exemption for the District's Nitrate Treatment System Project and direct staff to file the notice with the county clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roy Frausto

Assistant General Manager

Enclosure

- *Notice of Exemption*