

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From (Public Agency):
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812

Project Title: Re-Operation of Pyramid Dam for the California Aqueduct Pump Storage Project - South State Water Project Hydropower (Water Quality Certification Temporary Amendment)

Project Applicant: Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Project Location - Specific: Pyramid Lake and Middle Piru Creek.

Project Location - City: Not Applicable

Project Location – Counties: Los Angeles, Ventura

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: On February 10, 2023, DWR requested a temporary variance from the water quality certification (certification) issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for the Re-Operation of Pyramid Dam Water Quality Certification for the South State Water Project Hydropower's (Project; Federal Energy Commission [FERC] Project No. 2426). The variance involves a request to temporarily increase the amount of water deliveries from Pyramid Lake to United Water Conservation District (United) at Piru Lake. Condition 1 of the certification requires stream releases from Pyramid Lake to match natural inflow, and has a limitation of 3,150 acre-feet for water deliveries. DWR requested to deliver up to 25,000 acre-feet of additional water to United, in water years 2022-2023 and the 2023-2024. The release will mimic the natural hydrograph, will include a gradual ramp up and ramp down of flows, and will have a peak flow similar to that of a typical storm event. The proposed increase of the Project's water delivery is to help replenish critically depleted groundwater in United's service boundary.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: State Water Resources Control Board

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

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));

Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(c); EO N-7-22, paragraph 5)

Reasons why project is exempt: On February 15, 2023, the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency approved suspension of CEQA requirements for the Project under drought emergency Executive Order N-7-22, paragraph 5. The exemption applies because the proposed releases are intended to improve the conditions of the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley groundwater basins, which are experiencing severely depleted groundwater conditions.

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Date: February 17, 2023

Title: Environmental Program Manager I Date received for filing at OPR: