



State Water Resources Control Board

August 17, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Aug 17 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Merced County
Attn: Tiffany Ho
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

MERCED COUNTY (COUNTY), ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE VIERRA DAIRY EXPANSION PROJECT (PROJECT); STATE CLEARINGHOUSE #2021100002

Dear Ms. Tiffany Ho:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the EIR for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (State Water Board, DDW) is responsible for issuing water supply permits pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Project is within the jurisdiction of the State Water Board, DDW's Merced District. DDW Merced District may issue a domestic water supply permit to the public water systems serviced with a new or modified source of domestic water supply or new domestic water system components pursuant to Waterworks Standards (Title 22 CCR chapter 16 et. seq.). A public water system requires a new water supply permit if it includes the creation of a new public water system for changes to a water supply source, storage, or treatment and for the operation of new water system components- as specified in the Waterworks Standards.

Health & Safety Code section 116527(b) requires that any person submitting a permit application for a proposed new public water system must first submit a technical report at least six months before initiating construction of any drinking water related improvements. The technical report must include an examination of the possibility of consolidation with an existing public water system or consolidation of multiple proposed public water systems.

The Applicant may need to apply for a water supply permit for this Project.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the County's EIR:

- The Merced County Department of Environmental Health requires a water supply permit from the Division of Drinking Water for the public water system as

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

a condition of Project approval (PDF page 59). As stated above, the State Water Board permits public water systems.

- Please describe the existing water system components that will become part of the new public water system and if any new system components, such as storage tanks or treatment systems will be needed. Reference the location of water system components on Figures 3-4 and 3-6, as applicable.
- The EIR indicates that domestic wells had elevated nitrate and electroconductivity levels (Appendix I, PDF page 22). Please discuss what is known about the domestic well water quality and if there may be a need for treatment.
- Please discuss who will be served by the public water system. Will some of the domestic wells remain private?

If a new water system will be created, once the EIR is certified, please forward the following items in support of the new water system's permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Merced District Office at DWPDIST11@waterboards.ca.gov:

- Copy of the draft and final EIR with the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP).
- Copy of any comment letters received and the lead agency responses as appropriate.
- Copy of the Resolution or Board Minutes adopting the EIR and MMRP; and
- Copy of the date stamped Notice of Determination filed at the Merced County Clerk's Office and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse.

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, if you have any questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Shawn Demmers
District Engineer
Merced District