



California Environmental Quality Act: Notice of Exemption

To: State Clearinghouse
CA Office of Planning and Research
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From: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Project Title: Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate near-term actions to maintain the elevation of water in Lake Mead above elevation 1,020 feet, and to provide up to 20 percent of the non-federal cost share of any such actions, not to exceed \$10 million per year in 2022 and 2023, and delegate authority to the General Manager to enter into additional agreements as needed to implement the MOU.

Project Location - Specific: 700 N Alameda St

Project Location - City: Los Angeles

Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States, the State of Arizona, the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, the State of Nevada, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (known as the "500+ Plan MOU") and agreements necessary to implement the 500+ Plan MOU to facilitate near-term actions necessary to maintain the elevation of water in Lake Mead above elevation 1,020 feet. The 500+ Plan MOU is a commitment by water managers in Arizona, Nevada, and California to facilitate actions that could add 500,000 acre-feet (AF) of water to Lake Mead in both 2022 and 2023. The sources of water for the 500+ Plan MOU could include the creation of additional Intentionally Created Surplus and additional system conservation throughout the Colorado River Lower Basin.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Exempt Status: (check as applicable)

- Not a Project (Public Resources Code §21065; State CEQA Guidelines §15378(b)(4))
- Ministerial (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guidelines)
- Declared Emergency (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guidelines §15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(4); State CEQA Guidelines)
- Categorical Exemption, Class 1, State CEQA Guidelines §15301
- Statutory Exemption, Public Resources Code §21080(b)(14); State CEQA Guidelines §15277
- Other, State CEQA Guidelines §15061(b)(3)

Reasons why project is exempt: The proposed actions of authorizing and entering into the MOU to (1) facilitate near-term actions necessary to maintain the elevation of water in Lake Mead above elevation 1,020 feet and (2) provide up to 20 percent of the non-federal cost share of any such future actions not to exceed \$10 million per year in 2022 and 2023, and (3) delegate authority to the General Manager to enter into additional agreements as needed to implement the Memorandum of Understanding are not subject to CEQA because they involve the creation of government funding mechanisms and other government fiscal activities that do not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines). Additionally, the potential environmental impacts associated with any federal actions necessary to implement the MOU were analyzed in the 2007 Environmental Impact Statement (2007 EIS) for continued implementation of the 2007 Interim Guidelines. The 2007 EIS is posted at <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/strategies/FEIS/index.html>. The proposed actions are within the scope of actions that were previously analyzed in that document and will be subject to further environmental review under the NEPA as necessary. Finally, to the extent the proposed actions involve or may affect areas outside of California, such as at Lake Mead or on the portions of the Colorado River in Nevada and Arizona, they are exempt from CEQA under a Statutory Exemption (Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(14) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15277).

Lead Agency Contact Person: Sean Carlson at (213) 217-6276

Signature: _____

Sean Carlson, Environmental Planning Manager
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Date: December 14, 2021