

**SOUTH COAST WATER DISTRICT
Notice of Exemption**

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: South Coast Water District
31592 West Street
Laguna Beach CA 92651

Project Title: Lot B Grading & Temporary Use

Project Location – Specific: 33750 Stonehill Drive, Dana Point, CA

Project Location – City: Dana Point, CA **Project Location – County:** Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Lot B is one of one of seven contiguous parcels that make up the South Coast Water District's (District) San Juan Creek "30-acres" property. The 30-acres has been under development by the District for several years. The District's Groundwater Recovery Facility (GRF) and site access road have been completed with the remainder of the 30-acres including part of Lot B being used as temporary boat and vehicle storage and leased vacant land for a variety of tenants. Development of the 30-acres has been in two Phases: Phase 1 is fill, grading and drainage control; Phase 2 is temporary uses or final use as in the case of the GRF. A 0.75-acre of Lot B includes a swale area that the District intends to fill to allow temporary use as boat and recreational vehicle storage or other appropriate temporary use (see photograph in Attachment A). Final use of Lot B is anticipated to be District offices, operations and maintenance facilities, or other operational infrastructure to support District facility consolidation and operations.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: South Coast Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: South Coast Water District

Exempt Status (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 15073)
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 15071(a))
- Emergency Project (Sec. 15073(b) and (c))

- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: *Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is found to be Categorically Exempt per Section 15304(c) (Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land) in that the project involves filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site.*

Reason why project is exempt: See Attachment A

Lead Agency Contact Person: Marc Serna, Chief Engineer

Area Code / Telephone / Extension: (949) 499-4555



Signature

10/4/21

Date

AGIM / CHIEF ENGINEER

Title: Chief Engineer

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant. Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment A
Supplemental Information
Reasons Why Project is Exempt

Biological Resources and Habitat

A general habitat assessment was conducted for the Project site by Glenn Lukos Associates (GLA) in 2021. A biological resources summary is provided below.

Plant Species

The 0.75-acre Project site consists of undeveloped space dominated by upland, non-native species and contains no riparian habitat. No federally or state listed, threatened, or endangered plant species, or habitats capable of supporting such species, were observed on the Project site during a general habitat assessment conducted by GLA in April and July 2021. The Project would not result in impacts to any special status plant species.

Wildlife Species

No federally or state listed, threatened, or endangered animal species, or habitats capable of supporting such species, were observed on the Project site during a general habitat assessment conducted by GLA in April 2021. The Project would not result in impacts to any special status animal species.

Wetlands and Waters

The 0.75-acre site does not contain a well-defined drainage course that exhibits a bed or bank. Relative to fish and wildlife resources, the swale is dominated by herbaceous upland non-native species and does not contain any riparian habitat and contains no woody species.

Land Use

Proposed use of the project site is consistent with City of Dana Point Zoning Code and compatible with surrounding land uses. Construction work will be temporary and there are no project activities that are incompatible with surrounding land uses.

Protection Measures

Protection of Water Quality During Construction

Filling and grading of the swale area of Lot B will be included in the Applicant's existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit for Lot B. The Applicant has filed a Notice of Intent (NOI), developed and submitted a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in accordance with Section A of the General Permit, and received a Waste Discharger Identification number (WDID#9 30C369404) for work at other areas of Lot B. The General Permit allows for the increase of the total acreage covered under the General Permit when new acreage is added to the project. Prior to any work involving the swale area of Lot B, the Applicant will amend the NOI to include the swale area. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are identified in the SWPPP and would be implemented to reduce impacts to surface water from construction or stormwater discharges.

Protection of Water Quality Post-Construction

A Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) for adjacent Lot A has been prepared, submitted, and approved by the City of Dana Point. If required by the City of Dana Point, a similar WQMP will be prepared for the Lot B Project site for submission to the City of Dana Point. The WQMP will include post-construction BMPs for the protection of water quality, including site design, structural and non-structural source control BMPs. In the developed condition, runoff from the Project site will discharge to the pre-existing storm drain connections downstream. Stormwater runoff from the adjacent railroad right-of-way will enter the existing culvert and flow through a newly constructed culvert, discharging to a concrete-lined stream on-site before eventually discharging to the San Juan Creek.

Finding - CEQA (Exempt): The project is exempt from environmental review with the following findings:

- a) Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is found to be Categorically Exempt per Section 15304(c) (Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land) in that the project involves filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site. Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.
- b) The Project site consists of undeveloped space dominated by upland, non-native species and contains no riparian habitat.
- c) The project site does not include any trees or other woody vegetation.
- d) Project plans include measures for protection of water quality during construction and operation.
- e) Proposed use of the project site is consistent with City of Dana Point Zoning Code and compatible with surrounding land uses.
- f) Review by District staff indicates there are no unusual circumstances associated with the project or the property that would require further environmental review.

Site Photo

