



Hans W. Kernkamp, General Manager-Chief Engineer

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**DATE:** June 20, 2022

**TO:** County Clerk, County of Riverside (County)

**PROJECT CASE NO/TITLE:** NOE 22-03/ Highgrove Landfill Pilot Test Remedial Action Plan (RAP)

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Highgrove Landfill, 1420 Highgrove Pass Road Unincorporated Riverside County, Highgrove Area, California

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Pilot Test RAP (Project) is to provide the information specified in CRWQCB-SAR Order No. R8-2018-0092. The Project will conduct a bioaugmentation pilot test using existing pump and treat wells.

**PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT:** County of Riverside

**PROJECT SPONSORS:** Department of Waste Resources (RCDWR)

The project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA, specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2. The project will not cause any impacts to scenic resources, historic resources, or unique sensitive environments. Further, no unusual circumstances or potential cumulative impacts would occur that may reasonably create a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical environmental impact.

### EXEMPT STATUS:

- Ministerial
- Declared Emergency
- Emergency Project
- Statutory Exemption:
- Categorical Exemption

**Section 15301, Existing Facilities; 15306, Information Collection**

- Other Exemption:

**Section 15061(b)(3), General Rule Exemption**

### REASONS FOR EXEMPTION:

#### **Section 15061(b)(3) - General Rule Exemption**

The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects, which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

**This project is exempt under Section 15061(b)(3) because:**

The Project proposes to utilize the existing infrastructure of the RCDWR's groundwater pump and treat system (PNT) to conduct a bioaugmentation pilot test using existing pump and treat wells. The Project involves no expansion of approved uses and would not have a direct, indirect, or cumulatively significant effect on the environment. The Project would not have an effect on environmental resources, as such the Project meets the scope and intent of Section 15061(b)(3), General Rule Exemption.

Based upon the entire record, the Project would not result in the potential for any significant effect on the environment. This determination is an issue of fact and sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity will not have a significant effect on the environment. As such, the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *Muzzy Ranch Co. v. Solano County Airport Land Use Comm'n* (2007) 41 Cal. 4<sup>th</sup> 372.

**Section 15301, Existing Facilities**

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

**This project is exempt under Section 15301 because:**

The Project proposes to utilize the existing infrastructure of the RCDWR's groundwater pump and treat system (PNT) for the Pilot Test. The RCDWR shall use elements of the PNT system to create an injection and recirculation system. Nearby groundwater wells that are part of the PNT system shall not be operated during the Pilot Test. As such, the Project is found not to affect any environmental resources; therefore, the Project meets the scope and intent of Section 15301, Categorical Exemption.

**Section 15306, Information Collection**

Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in serious or major disturbances to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted or funded.

**This project is exempt under Section 15306 because:**

The Project proposes to continue RCDWR's ongoing Engineering Feasibility Study which involves site visits and data gathering. The Project does not affect any environmental resources; therefore, the Project meets the scope and intent of Section 15306, Categorical Exemption.

**FINDINGS:**

1. Based upon the identified exemptions and justifications above, the RCDWR, on behalf of the County, hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the Project as proposed is exempt under CEQA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.
2. The proposed Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3), and categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 and 15306.

3. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this Project would have a direct, indirect, or cumulatively significant effect on the environment; therefore, the activity is exempt under CEQA as previously identified.

If there are any questions regarding the above matter, I can be reached at (951) 486-3200.

**Hans Kernkamp, General Manager - Chief Engineer  
Riverside County Department of Waste Resources**

By:   
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Ryan Ross

Title: Planning Division Manager

Date: June 20, 2022

DM# 295000