

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

 County Clerk/County Recorder
 County of Fresno
 P.O. Box 766
 Fresno, CA 93712

From: Westlands Water District
 P.O. Box 6056
 Fresno, CA 93703

Project Title: Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project

Project Applicant: Westlands Water District

Project Location – Specific: APN 073-090-07 and 073-090-08

Project Location – City: N/A

Project Location – County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project (Project) is a recharge project under the California Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program to replenish and store water in the groundwater basin that will help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought. The main element of the conjunctive use recharge project is the construction of the recharge facility which includes approximately fifteen (15) dry wells to a total depth of approximately 110 feet below surface for shallow wells and 300 feet below surface for deep wells at the recharge site, and two recharge basins. Other elements of the Project are a pipeline to convey water from the Coalinga Canal to the recharge site, as well as associated earthwork and equipment including a pumping station, flow meters, valves, and other appurtenances. The recharge facility would be operated during years when excess surface water is available. The maximum annual water supply benefit is estimated to be up to 10,800 acre-feet per year.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

Westlands Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Westlands Water District.

Exempt Status: (*check one*)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15269(c));
- Categorical Exemption. (CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301);
- Statutory Exemptions. (Sec. 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15269(c));

Reasons why project is exempt:

On March 28, 2022, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency (Proclamation) to address the severe drought condition in California by suspending CEQA for purposes of carrying out Executive Order N-7-22 (EO). The Project will carry out the Paragraph 13 of the EO and will prevent or mitigate the impacts of the drought emergency. Government Code section 8571 authorizes the Governor to suspend certain regulatory requirements, including CEQA, under emergency conditions.

The Project is an emergency project and is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines section 15269(c) because it involves specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate the drought emergency.


Lead Agency

Contact Person: Russ Freeman

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 241-6241

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? YESNO

Signature:  Date: 8/9/2022 Title: Deputy General Manager Resources

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108(b), 21152(b), Public Resources Code.