

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, California 95814

FROM: Stratford Public Utility District
19681 Railroad Street
Stratford, CA 93266

County Clerk/Recorder, County of Kings

1400 West Lacey Blvd, Building No. 7
Hanford, California 93230

Project Title: Water Storage Tank and Well Replacement Project

Project Location - Specific: Section 17, Township 20 South, Range 20 East, MDB&M. The project location is South of Lansing Avenue, East of Empire Avenue (20-1/2 Avenue), and West of Stratford Canal.

Project Location - City: Unincorporated Community of Stratford

Project Location - County: Kings

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Drill a pilot hole, analyze water quality, drill a production well, construct a water storage tank and connect the well and tank to the Stratford Public Utility District (District) water distribution system. The Project will provide needed water supplies to the community after the District's existing Well No 5 and Well No 7 failed to supply water to the community on August 10 and 12, 2018, respectively. The District has continuously been under a declaration of water supply emergency since August 12, 2018. The District installed Well No 8 which became operational in March of 2021. The District, however, needs a second reliable water well and a water storage tank to be in compliance with the State's Water Works Standards and prevent an emergency that is a threat to public health, safety and welfare.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Stratford Public Utility District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Stratford Public Utility District

Exempt Status: (Check One)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declare Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(c))
- Categorical Exemption:
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons why project is exempt:

As of October 2022, Well No 8 is the District's only reliable drinking water well for the Community of Stratford (population about 1,300) including the Stratford Elementary school. The community is at least 7 miles from a larger community that could provide an emergency water connection. The District has continually been under a declaration of water supply emergency since August 12, 2018. The drilling

of a new production well (Well No 9), a water storage tank and pipeline connections of the well water storage tank to the District's water supply system will provide reliable and resilient water supplies to the community. The Stratford area is located in the western portion of the San Joaquin Valley. It is an area that is most severely affected by land subsidence due to groundwater pumping. The ongoing drought increases the probability in the short term of subsidence as surface water supplies are reduced. State Executive Order N-7-22, signed March 28, 2022, reaffirmed a State of Emergency that continues today and exists across all counties of California due to extreme and expanding drought conditions. The Kings County Board of Supervisors declared a local state of emergency on April 1, 2022, due to the current drought conditions. In 2018, the community lost the use of existing Well Nos. 5 and 7, in the same week. The wells became inoperable due to well casing damage from ground subsidence. The community was out of water. For weeks the community relied on bottled water for drinking, and non potable water trucked and/or pumped in for bathing and washing. Well No 5 can now only be operated at only 1/2 of the well's capacity and its salt content (ie conductance) is close to exceeding the State's secondary maximum contaminant level. The District's only reliable water source, Well No 8, has experienced a reduction in production capacity from April 2020 to August 2021 of 11 percent as the groundwater pumping level dropped about 100 feet over that time period.

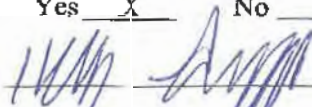
The installation of a second reliable well (No 9) and a water storage tank and ancillary facilities will help prevent or mitigate a water outage emergency. The anticipated period of time to conduct an environmental review of the Water Storage Tank and Well Replacement Project could create a risk to public health, safety and welfare. The loss of Well No 8 due to subsidence would be catastrophic to the Community of Stratford. The construction of a new well and water storage tank will mitigate that risk.

The water storage tank site is located adjacent to the Well No 8 site constructed in 2020. The water storage tank, ancillary facilities, pipeline alignments and Well No 9 site (s) are located on land that has been previously farmed and is located inside the Stratford Community Plan and zoned for medium and high density residential.

Kelly Granger, General Manager	559	947-3037	
Lead Agency Contact Person	Area Code	Telephone	Extension

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?
 Yes X No

Signature:  Date: 10-12-22 Title: General Manager

- Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____
- Signed by Applicant