

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
Post Office Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, California 95812-3044

From: Central Coast Water Authority
255 Industrial Way
Buellton, CA 93427

Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Barbara
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

County Clerk-Recorder
County of San Luis Obispo
1055 Monterey Street, Room D120
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Project Title: Nipomo Chloramine Booster Station Project ("Project")

Location – Specific: APN 090-171-024 888 S. Thompson Rd. Nipomo, CA 93444; 35° 1'40.00"N, 120°27'35.34"W.

Location – County: San Luis Obispo

Description of Activity: Due to factors including prolonged drought and low delivery projections, the flow rates through Central Coast Water Authority's ("CCWA") water treatment plant and pipeline are projected to be far below what the systems were designed to accommodate. This low flow regime is projected to last well over five months and may extend throughout 2023. The consequence of low flow rates through the water treatment plant and pipeline is long travel times for the treated water to participants' respective turnouts. Drinking water standards require that detectable levels of secondary disinfectant must be maintained at all times in distribution systems that receive water produced from surface water treatment plants, such as CCWA's plant. The primary issue with increasing water age in the pipeline is the inability to maintain detectable levels of the secondary disinfectant, which could lead to a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) violation.

The Project entails installation of a booster chloramination station at an existing facility within the State Water Project pipeline easement. The original design of the pipeline at this location included provisions for adding a chloramination booster station in the future. Chemical injection quills are in-place and some road side improvements were made during the original construction of the pipeline to allow roadside delivery of chemical. This system planned for construction is designed to maintain potable water to the turnouts in the Santa Maria Valley. The Project includes construction of an approximate 100 sq. ft. building and a separate approximate 2,500-gallon sodium hypochlorite (12.5%) storage tank within an approximate 3,660 sq. ft. fenced in enclosure near the community of Nipomo. The building will house chemical injection equipment and a 300-gallon liquid ammonium sulfate (40%) storage tank for the existing, adjacent pipeline. The Project facilities would be used to store and to deliver sodium hypochlorite and liquid ammonium sulfate, both antimicrobial agents, into the pipeline to ensure the distribution of potable drinking water to users served by the pipeline. Additional road base would be added to improve the right-of-way along Thompson Avenue to allow adequate vehicle access to the building for safe delivery of chemical to the site. The total areas to be paved with road base is approximately 6,975 sq. ft. Additionally, a gated fence would be installed for security purposes.

Name of Public Agency Approving or Carrying Out Activity: Central Coast Water Authority

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial
- Declared Emergency
- Emergency Project
- Categorical Exemption
- Statutory Exemption (Not a Project Under CEQA)

Reasons why activity is exempt:

CEQA Guidelines section 15269 exempts emergency projects from CEQA, including “emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare.” (14 Cal. Code Regs. [“CEQA Guidelines”] § 15269(b).) Likewise, CEQA Guidelines section 15301 provides a categorical exemption for the operation and permitting of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, CEQA Guidelines section 15302 exempts the “replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced,” and CEQA Guidelines section 15303 exempts construction of new, small facilities or structures, defined by CCWA’s Local CEQA Guidelines to include structures appurtenant to existing facilities that do not exceed 500 sq. ft.

The proposed Project is exempt as an Emergency Project under CEQA Guidelines section 15269 because the prolonged drought has caused flow rates through CCWA’s water treatment plant and pipeline to be far below what the systems were designed to accommodate, causing concern for water quality and safety. The Project is crucial to ensure that water delivered to end users continues to meet water quality standards and to protect public health and safety.

The proposed project also fits within the categorical exemptions in CEQA Guidelines sections 15301–15303 because the proposed project is required to operate and utilize the preexisting water delivery infrastructure at an existing public facility. The pipeline infrastructure includes an existing mechanism to inject the disinfectant into the pipeline and the site has existing access, which would be improved through the addition of road base under the Project. All aspects of the Project would be sited within a property that houses existing infrastructure and the expansion of the use of the site will be negligible. Specifically, the Project’s construction of the approximate 100 sq. ft. building is well within the 500 sq. ft. maximum permitted under CCWA’s Local CEQA Guidelines. The building, road base, and fence line will not expand beyond the easement boundary and are intended to support the continued operation of the existing pipeline.

None of the exceptions to use of an exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 apply. CCWA and its environmental consultant have not identified any known environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern that have been designated and mapped on the Project property. The cumulative impact would not be significant because there are no planned successive projects of the same type in the same location. If water quality concerns are observed in the future after water is conveyed out of the Santa Maria Valley and travels to what is known as “Tank 5,” CCWA may consider the future installation of a second booster station at another location near the Golden State Water Company Turnout. However, CCWA staff has not recommended the second station and the need for any second station cannot be considered until this Project is constructed and evaluated. There are no unusual circumstances present and the proposed Project is located in an area that is surrounded by agricultural disturbance and has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. No wetlands or other special habitats are present at the site or in the nearby area. There are no scenic highways located near the Project that would be impacted and the Project is not located on a hazardous waste site that is included on any compiled list

pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Lastly, the Project is not located near any known historical resources and will not impact any known historical resources.

Agency Contact Person: Ray Stokes

Telephone: (805) 688-2292



Signature: _____

Date: November 21, 2022

Ray Stokes

Title: Executive Director, Central Coast Water Authority

Date received for filing OPR: _____