

Notice of Exemption

To:

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

County Clerk
San Diego County

From:

State of California Department of Water
Resources
770 Fairmont Ave, Suite 200
Glendale, CA 91203-1035

Project Title: Drilling and Construction of Monitoring Wells – Borrego Springs Subbasin

Project Applicant: State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Projection Location – City: Borrego Springs

Project Location – County: San Diego County

Project Location - Specific: The proposed project site is located on private property used for agriculture in Borrego Springs, California, in San Diego County. The drilling will occur in a graded dirt lot adjacent to a paved roadway and is planned for two adjacent locations at coordinates: 33.325079 degrees North - 116.367810 degrees West and 33.325006 degrees North, -116.367803 degrees West (WGS 1984). The staging area is approximately 200 feet by 200 feet.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Department of Water Resources Technical Support Services Program proposes to drill and install two single-completion monitoring wells in the Borrego Springs Subbasin in cooperation with Borrego Water District. The purpose of the wells is to fill data gaps within the groundwater monitoring network and provide hydrogeologic data. Construction of the wells is anticipated to conclude by March 31, 2023.

Drilling will consist of initially setting a 16-inch by 50-foot permanent conductor casing to advance a 10-inch-diameter boring. One monitoring well will be drilled up to approximately 975 feet below ground surface (bgs) and the second monitoring well will be drilled up to approximately 475 feet.

After the total depth of the deeper boring is reached, down-hole geophysical logging will be performed including: natural gamma ray; spontaneous potential; short-normal, long-normal and point electrical resistivity logs; alignment; and a caliper survey. After the geophysical logs have been completed and formation samples evaluated, DWR will construct a well screen and seal for each location.

All drill cuttings will be stockpiled on-site at an unused dirt lot with the potential for re-use. Should soil testing within the drill cutting reveal contaminants of concern above threshold levels, cuttings are to be disposed of at a designated waste facility. All drilling fluids and borehole water will be containerized in plastic lined roll-off bins and disposed of at a designated waste facility unless otherwise specified by DWR, Borrego Water District and/or the landowner.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: State of California Department of Water Resources

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: State of California Department of Water Resources

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemptions: Information Collection, Class 6, 15306, Title 14 CCR.

Reason why project is exempt: The proposed Project is categorically exempt under Class 6, Section 15306 because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a significant impact to an environmental resource.

A preconstruction survey was conducted which revealed no sensitive resources on the proposed Project site. A California Natural Diversity Database search indicates known populations of: *Ovis canadensis nelsoni* pop. 2, *Helianthus niveus* ssp. *Tephrodes*, and *Astragalus magdalenae* var. *peirsonii* to exist within the Clark Lake USGS 7.5' quad where the proposed project is located. The proposed Project site was scouted for potential activity of these listed species and none was found on the site. The possibility exists that the bighorn sheep species listed above may be present in the nearby mountains and hills, but the construction activities would be a transitory disturbance and the animal would be able to avoid the construction area. The DWR construction monitor will conduct a daily survey for nesting birds. If evidence of nesting birds is found, construction will halt until the birds conclude nesting behavior. The proposed project site is located on the landowner's orchard, thus the area is already heavily disturbed and unsuitable for habitation.

Visqueen or a similar type of plastic sheeting will be placed under all equipment to reasonably prevent minor equipment oil or fluids to drip onto the ground. Water, fluids, and hazardous materials would not be expected to contact the ground. The adjacent roadway has no vehicle traffic and will not require traffic control measures.

Overall, no significant impacts would be anticipated for biological resources, air quality, visual impact, water quality, land surface, or historic and archaeological resources. Operation of the drill rig would create noise; the completed monitoring wells would be silent.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Albert Lu

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (818) 621-9297

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving this project? Yes No

Signature: Vic Nguyen **Date:** 3/1/2023 **Title:** Regional Manager, Southern Region

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority Cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.