NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO:

☒ **Office of Planning and Research**
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ **Shasta County Clerk**
1643 Market Street
Redding, CA 96001

FROM:

Fall River Valley Community Services District
24850 3rd Street
Fall River Mills, CA 96028

Project Title: Fall River Valley Community Services District McArthur Well No. 1 Improvements

Project Location: The proposed project is located within the unincorporated communities of McArthur and Fall River Mills in Shasta County. As shown in **Figure 1**, well and office building improvements would occur in Sections 3, 10, and 31, Township 37N, Range 5E and improvements at the FRVCSD booster pump station would occur in Section 36, Township 37N, Range 4E of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Fall River Mills 7.5-minute quadrangle. The proposed project includes improvements to the Fall River Valley Community Services District's (FRVCSD or District) existing office building, McArthur Well No. 1, and booster pump station. The FRVCSD office building is located on District-owned property at 24850 3rd Street in the community of Fall River Mills (Shasta County Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 032-180-046). The FRVCSD booster pump station is located on District-owned property adjacent to the Country Club Subdivision, directly south of State Route (APN 023-390-006). The well site is located on District-owned property east of Lewis Road in the community of McArthur (APN 018-450-020).

City: McArthur and Fall River Mills (unincorporated)	**County:** Shasta

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The FRVCSD water system provides potable water to residents and businesses in the communities of Fall River Mills and McArthur. Currently, FRVCSD maintains two wells; however, the District relies solely on McArthur Well No. 1. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide the communities of McArthur and Fall River Mills with safe and reliable water.

Proposed improvements at the McArthur Well No. 1 site include the following. Improvements may be phased based on availability of funding.

- The existing 40 horsepower (HP) well pump and motor would be replaced with a new 125 HP motor and pump to provide capacity to meet current peak water demands and to provide some fire protection to McArthur until a new elevated storage tank is installed. The new motor would be driven by a variable frequency drive (VFD) with input filters to balance incoming power.
- The damaged concrete well head pedestal would be demolished and replaced.
- New 400 AMP electric panels, conduits, and conductors would be installed. The majority of these improvements would be installed while the well is online to minimize the amount of down time for the well. The electric panels would be installed on the west wall of the well building.
- A new exhaust fan, thermostatic control, and intake weatherhood with an insulated damper and damper actuator would be installed.
- To reduce the amount of heat from the back-up engine in the well building, improvements would be made to allow circulation of outside air; an air intake and damper would be installed in the west wall of the well building, and two 12V exhaust fans, dampers, and exhaust openings would be installed on the east wall. All exposed exhaust pipe would be insulated. A mains-powered exhaust fan would be installed.
- A new well level sounder that continuously measures the water level in the well would be installed; this information would be transmitted to the District's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. Modifications to the existing SCADA system would be completed to incorporate changes resulting from the proposed improvements.

- Improvements would be made to the well building, including replacing the existing roof structure, rafters, fascia, and plywood ceiling. Class A metal roofing and flashing would be installed. Soffits would be boxed and vents would be added for the attic space. The existing roof-mounted well access hatch would be replaced with a more accessible and watertight unit. The building's exterior metal siding and sheeting would be replaced.
- A 200-kW diesel-powered emergency back-up generator would be installed in the northeastern area of the property.
- A segment of waterline on the well site would be relocated to accommodate the new generator.

Proposed improvements at the District office site include creating a new fire-rated room inside the existing office building to house an emergency back-up 25-kW natural gas-powered generator and associated equipment. Additional ventilation and exhaust piping would be installed. The existing natural gas service may need to be increased depending on the existing demand. A portable generator would be parked at the District's booster pump station (BPS); no earth disturbance would be required as a manual transfer switch and generator receptacle are existing at the site. The portable generator would solely serve the BPS.

Staging of materials and construction equipment would occur within District-owned parcels. No site preparation or grading would be required, and no trees would be removed.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Fall River Valley Community Services District

Name of Agency Carrying out the Project: Fall River Valley Community Services District

Local Agency Contact Person: Cecil Ray, General Manager, 530.336.5263

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption:

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (CEQA Guidelines):

Class 1, §15301 (Existing Facilities)

Reason Why Project Is Exempt:

Class 1 authorizes 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 existing or former use.

The project is consistent with the categorical exemption noted above because work would consist of the replacement of the existing well motor, pump, and pedestal, and the installation of a new generator. No mature trees would be removed, and no expansion of the District's water system would occur. No wetlands or other waters are present on the project site.

As documented in **Attachment A**, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; would not result in damage to scenic resources within a scenic highway; is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code; would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource; and would not result in cumulative impacts.

Signature: _____ **Date**: 08.10.2023

Cecil Ray, General Manager
Fall River Valley Community Services District

Attachments:

Figure 1:	Project Location and Vicinity
Figure 2:	McArthur Well No. 1 Site Plan
Figure 3:	FRVCSD Office Building Site
Figure 4:	FRVCSD Booster Pump Station Site
Attachment A:	Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption

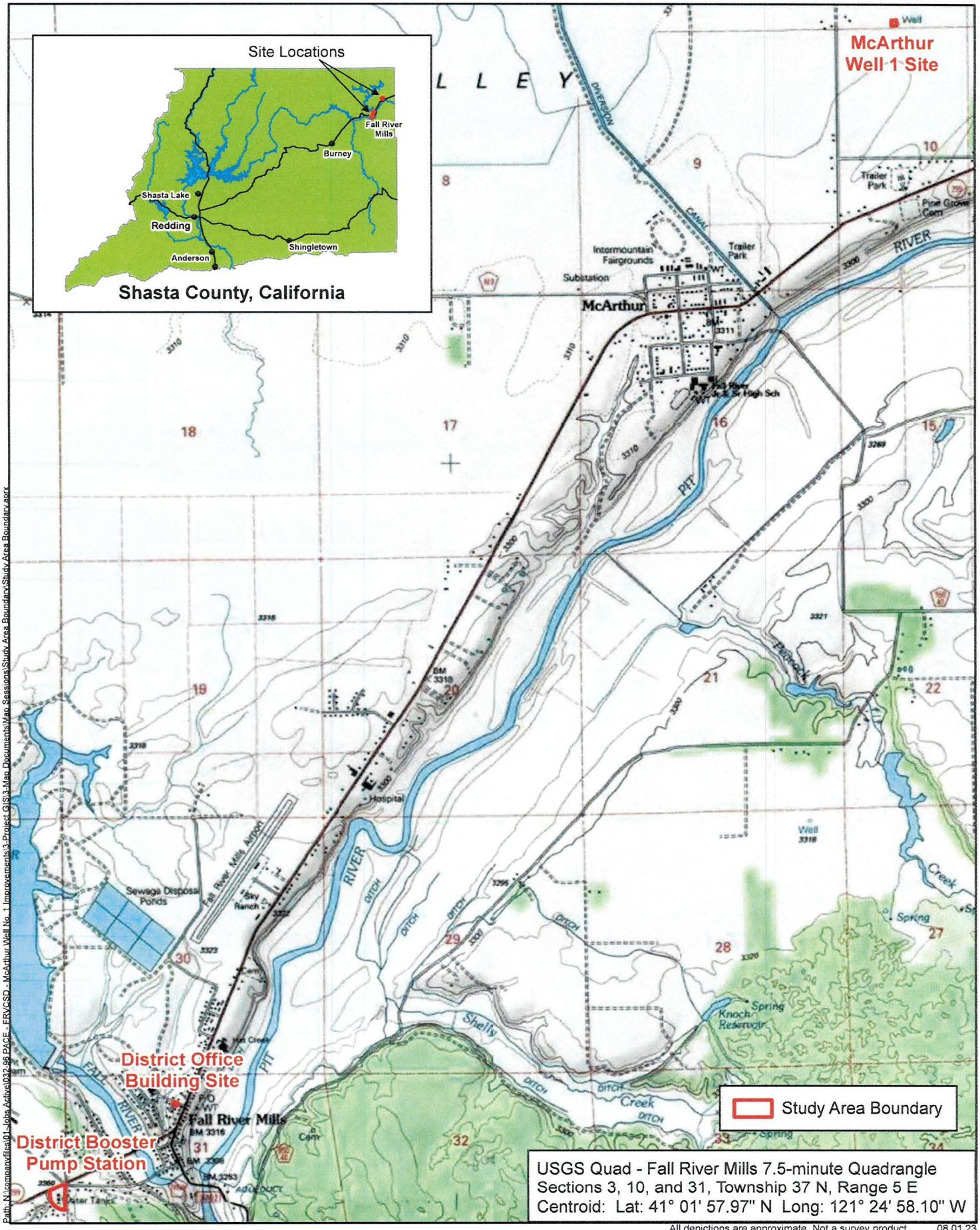

Figure 1

Project Location and Vicinity

ENPLAN

Path: N:\mmonroe\files\01-Jobs Active\032-06 PACE - FRVCSD - McArthur Well No. 1 Improvements\3-Project GIS\3-Map Documents\Map Sessions\Study Area Boundary\Study Area Boundary.aprx

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All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 06.23.23

Feet
0 33

Figure 2
McArthur Well No. 1 Site

ENPLAN

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All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 08.01.23

Feet
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Figure 3
FRVCSD Office Building Site

ENPLAN

All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 08.01.23

0 100 Feet

Figure 4

FRVCSD Booster Pump Station Site

ENPLAN

ATTACHMENT A

Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption

Fall River Valley Community Services District, McArthur Well No. 1 Improvements Project

As described in the Notice of Exemption (NOE), the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to §15301 (Class 1-Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 identifies exceptions that override a lead agency's ability to use a categorical exemption. These exceptions are listed below, followed by documentation of why each exception does not apply to the proposed project.

1. Location. *Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*

The proposed project is not supported by a Class 3, 4, 5, 6, or 11 exemption.

2. Cumulative Impact. *All exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant.*

The proposed project would include improvements to the District's existing McArthur Well No. 1 and office building. The District is currently planning to construct a well in Fall River Mills, ±5 miles southwest of the McArthur Well No. 1 site and ±0.15 miles northwest of the FRVCSD office building. However, improvements to the office building will be limited to inside the existing building and there would be no earth disturbance at the BPS site. Therefore, the project's impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

3. Significant Effect. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

An "unusual circumstance" exists if the project's circumstances differ from the general circumstances of projects covered by the applicable exemption, and, if so, whether there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment *due to* the unusual circumstances. As documented below, there are no unusual circumstances that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Aesthetics:

Existing structures at the McArthur Well No. 1 site include a well building, propane tank, transformer, and protective bollards around the propane tank and transformer. The proposed improvements would be visually consistent with the existing features and would not conflict with the existing visual character of the area. Improvements to the existing District office building would be limited to the interior of the building and there would be no earth disturbance at the BPS; there would be no change to the existing character of these areas. Additionally, the project site is not an area of unique scenic vistas and temporary visual impacts during construction due to excavation and staging activities would cease upon the completion of the improvements; no unusual circumstances apply and no significant impacts would occur.

Agriculture and Forest Resources:

All three project sites are located on District-owned property. The office building parcel is zoned One-Family Residential (R-1) and designated as Urban Residential (UR) in the Shasta County General Plan; no impacts to agricultural or forest resources would occur at this location. The BPS parcel is zoned Public Facility (PF) and designated as Suburban Residential (SR); no impacts to agricultural or forest resources would occur at this location.

The well site parcel is zoned PF and designated as Agricultural Croplands (A-C). The new generator would be installed in a previously disturbed area on the same parcel. Although surrounding properties have historically been used for agricultural crop production, the proposed improvements would not interfere with these activities. Further, no mature trees would be removed. Therefore, there would be no impact on agricultural uses or forest resources.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions/Energy:

The proposed project would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NOx, PM_{10}, and other regulated pollutants during construction. ROG and NOx emissions are associated with employee vehicle trips, delivery of materials, and construction equipment exhaust. PM_{10} would be generated during site preparation, excavation, and from exhaust associated with construction equipment. Due to the limited scope of the project and temporary nature of the work, impacts during construction would be minimal.

There would be a minor increase in indirect operational emissions due to the use of electricity to operate the new exhaust fan and the larger well pump and motor; however, the new motor would be driven by a VFD with input filters to balance incoming power. The new generators would be used only in the event of an emergency and for limited times during monthly testing. These improvements would not be considered a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

There are no unusual circumstances associated with air quality, GHGs, or energy use that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Biological Resources:

Improvements to the FRVCSD office building would be limited to the interior and no earth disturbance would occur at the BPS site; therefore, impacts to biological resources would occur. Thus, for the purposes of this evaluation, the record searches and field evaluation addressed only the McArthur Well No. 1 site.

Special-Status Species

The evaluation of potential impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats was based on a records search and field observations.

Records reviewed for the evaluation consisted of California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records for special-status plants, animals, and natural communities; California Native Plant Society (CNPS) records for special-status plants in the Fall River Mills 7.5-minute quadrangle; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) records for federally listed, proposed, and candidate plant and animal species under jurisdiction of the USFWS; and USFWS records for migratory birds of conservation concern.

Field evaluations were completed by an ENPLAN biologist on April 3 and June 17, 2020. Some of the special-status species potentially occurring in the well site would not have been evident at the time the fieldwork was conducted; however, determination of their potential presence could readily be made based on observed habitat characteristics.

Special-Status Plants

Review of the USFWS species list for the well site did not identify any federally listed plant species as potentially occurring in the well site. The well site does not contain designated critical habitat for federally listed plant species.

A review of CNDDB records showed that no special-status plants have been reported in the well site. The following nine special-status plants have been reported within an approximate five-mile radius of the well site: Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop, bristly sedge, Howell's thelypodium, Lemmon's milk-vetch, long-leaved starwort, marsh skullcap, tufted loosestrife, watershield, and water star-grass.

CNPS records identified two additional special-status plant species reported in the Fall River Mills 7.5-minute quadrangle: hairy marsh hedge-nettle and northern slender pondweed. Four non-status plant

species were reported in the Fall River Mills 7.5-minute quadrangle: Baker cypress, Castlegar hawthorne, profuse-flowered pogogyne, and Tehama navarretia.

No special-status plant species or habitats capable of supporting such species were observed during the field surveys.

Special-Status Animals

Review of the USFWS species list for the well site identified the following federally listed animal species as potentially being present in the well site: Northern spotted owl, monarch butterfly, and Shasta crayfish. The USFWS species list does not identify designated critical habitat in the study area for any federally listed animal species. A review of CNNDB records showed that no special-status wildlife species have been reported on the well site. The following special-status wildlife species have been reported within an approximate five-mile radius of the project site: American badger, bald eagle, bank swallow, bigeye marbled sculpin, greater sandhill crane, hardhead, Oregon spotted frog, rough sculpin, Shasta crayfish, Sierra Nevada red fox (southern cascades DPS), tricolored blackbird, and western pond turtle. Ten non-status animals have also been mapped within the search radius: Archimedes pyrg, Great Basin rams-horn, great blue heron, kneecap lanx, montane peaclam, North American porcupine, nugget pebblesnail, prairie falcon, topaz juga, and western ridged mussel.

No special-status wildlife species or habitats capable of supporting such species were observed during the field surveys.

Natural Communities

The well site is heavily disturbed and primarily consists of developed and ruderal vegetative communities. Ruderal species include bristly fiddleneck, tansyaster, knotweed, and mullein. Introduced weed species include yellow star-thistle, bindweed, Russian thistle, and sow thistle. No wetlands, streams, other Waters of the State or United States, or sensitive natural communities are present on or adjacent to the project site.

Nesting Migratory Birds

The USFWS identified the following Birds of Conservation Concern as potentially being present in the project area: American White Pelican, bald eagle, black tern, California gull, Cassin's finch, Clark's grebe, evening grosbeak, Franklin's gull, golden eagle, lesser yellowlegs, Rufous hummingbird, Western grebe, and willet.

Although potentially suitable nesting habitat is present in the general project area, no suitable nesting habitat is present in the project site where earth-disturbing activities would occur. There is a potential that birds could nest on the well building and could potentially be affected if work on the building occurs during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31); however, existing State and federal laws are in place to protect nesting birds. Compliance with these laws and implementation of standard construction practices, including completion of pre-construction surveys if work occurs during the nesting season, would ensure that nesting birds are not adversely affected by project implementation. There are no unusual circumstances associated with nesting birds or other biological resources that preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Geology and Soils:

According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map for Shasta County, the project is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone to the project area is the McArthur Fault Zone, located ±0.8 miles west of the well site, ±3 miles west of the FRVCSD office building, and ±3.8 miles northeast of the FRVCSD BPS. The California Geologic Survey also identifies one potentially active fault in the Hat Creek Fault Zone immediately west of the office building site. A potentially active unnamed fault is identified ±3 miles southeast of the well site.

A Geotechnical Report was prepared by CGI Technical Services, Inc., in 2015 for a previously proposed project on the well site. The geotechnical study included field reconnaissance of site surface conditions, topography, and existing drainage features; two exploratory borings; laboratory testing; an evaluation of liquefaction potential; and estimated settlement projections. The Report concluded that surface faulting is

not anticipated to pose a significant risk on the property. Further, the potential for landslides, liquefaction and lateral spreading poses a low risk of adversely affecting the project site. Soils on the site have a medium expansion potential; however, expansive soils are not expected to have adverse effects, and no mitigation is needed. There are no unique circumstances related to geology and soils that would result in more significant impacts than other similar construction projects in the area.

Hydrology and Water Quality:

Construction activities would result in the temporary disturbance of soil and would expose disturbed areas to potential storm events, which could generate accelerated runoff, localized erosion, and sedimentation. However, this is a temporary impact during construction activities, and no long-term impacts would occur. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion/sediment control would be implemented during earth-disturbing activities in accordance with standard construction practices, which would minimize potential impacts to surface and groundwater quality.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panels 06089C0500G and 06089C0800G, 03/17/2011, Not Printed), the project sites are located in areas designated as unshaded Zone X (an area of minimal flood hazard); the project does not include any components that would impede or redirect flood flows or otherwise adversely affect the natural value and functions of the floodplain.

The project is located within the Fall River Valley groundwater basin, which is designated by the Department of Water Resources as a low-priority basin and is not subject to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan. Additionally, the proposed improvements would replace components of an existing well and groundwater pumping would not increase as a result of the project. The project would add a minimal amount of impervious surface and would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. There are no unique circumstances related to hydrology or water quality that would result in more significant impacts than other similar construction projects.

Land Use and Planning:

The project would not physically divide an established community or cause an environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation.

Mineral Resources:

The California Geological Survey has not designated any Mineral Resource Zones in the study area. In addition, there are no properties in the project area that are zoned or used for mining activities.

Noise:

Construction activities would generate noise and would temporarily increase noise levels in the project areas. The project includes installation of a natural gas-powered generator in the District's office building. However, because the generator would be housed inside the building, the potential for noise from the generator to impact residences adjacent to the office building would be negligible.

The project also includes the installation of a portable generator at the BPS location. The nearest sensitive receptors are residences less than 100 feet to the east and south; however, the generator would be used only in the event of an emergency and during routine maintenance. Therefore, an increase in ambient noise due to use of the generator would be temporary.

The project also includes the installation of a new diesel-powered emergency generator at the well site; however, the generator would be used only in the event of an emergency and for limited times during monthly testing. The nearest sensitive receptor is a single-family residence located ±1,000 feet west of the proposed generator at the well site. Due to the distance between the generator and the residence, it is not expected that noise from the generator would result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in the area. There are no unusual circumstances associated with noise that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Population and Housing:

The purpose of the project is to provide the communities of McArthur and Fall River Mills with safe and reliable water. Because the project would not increase the effective capacity of the water system, the project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area. There are no unusual circumstances associated with population or housing that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Public Services/Recreation:

Because the project would not induce population growth, the project would not generate a demand for additional fire protection, police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, or other public services.

Transportation/Traffic:

Because the project would not induce population growth, the project would not directly or indirectly result in a permanent increase in traffic or vehicle miles traveled (VMT). There would be short-term increases in traffic in the area associated with construction; however, this is a temporary impact and would cease upon completion of the improvements.

Utilities and Service Systems:

Other than the relocation of a short segment of waterline on the well site, the project would not require the relocation of sewer lines, electric facilities, storm drains, natural gas, or other utility infrastructure. Because the project would not induce population growth, no increased demand for water supply, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal services would occur.

Wildfire:

The proposed project does not include any development or improvements that would increase the long-term risk of wildland fires or expose people or structures to wildland fires. There are no unique circumstances associated with the proposed project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar projects in the area.

4. Scenic Highways. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a State Scenic Highway.*

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the project area; therefore, there would be no impact.

5. Hazardous Waste Sites. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code.*

The following databases were reviewed to locate "Cortese List" sites.

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database.
- SWRCB GeoTracker Database.
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
- List of active Cease and Desist Orders and Clean-Up and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB.

The records search revealed that there are no active clean-up sites or hazardous waste sites on or adjacent to the proposed project sites. The nearest open case is a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) clean-up site located on the south side of Highway 299, ±0.5 miles northeast of the BPS. Due to the distance from the clean-up site, the proposed project would not affect or be affected by the clean-up site.

6. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

A Cultural Resources Study was completed by SWCA Environmental Consultants in 2017 for a previously proposed project on the well site. The study included a records search, intensive field survey, and technical report that covered the entirety of the well site. The records search included review of records at the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NEIC/CHRIS). The following resource listings were reviewed: the *National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historic Resources, Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Archaeological* Determinations of Eligibility, and the *OHP Historic Property Directory*.

Archaeological fieldwork was completed on July 27, 2017, by SWCA archaeologist Katie Martin, during which the well site was intensively surveyed to identify cultural resources that could be potentially affected by the proposed project. No cultural resources were identified during the survey.

The records search was conducted at the NEIC/CHRIS in July 2017, and covered a 0.5-mile radius around the well site. The records search revealed that two archaeological surveys have been conducted within a 0.5-mile radius of the well site, neither of which covered the well site. No cultural resources have been previously recorded in the well site or within a 0.5-mile radius of the well site.

The Cultural Resources Study concluded that the project would have no effect on any known cultural resources. However, because there is always some potential for previously unknown cultural resources to be encountered during site excavation, the following standard construction measures would be included in construction contracts for the project to address the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains:

1. In the event of any inadvertent discovery of cultural resources (i.e., burnt animal bone, midden soils, projectile points or other humanly modified lithics, historic artifacts, etc.), all work within 50 feet of the find shall be halted until a professional archaeologist can evaluate the significance of the find in accordance with PRC §21083.2(g) and §21084.1, and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a). If any find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist, the FRVCSD shall meet with the archaeologist to determine the appropriate course of action. If necessary, a Treatment Plan prepared by an archaeologist outlining recovery of the resource, analysis, and reporting of the find shall be prepared. The Treatment Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the FRVCSD prior to resuming construction.
2. In the event that human remains are encountered during construction activities, the FRVCSD shall comply with §15064.5 (e) (1) of the CEQA Guidelines and PRC §7050.5. All project-related ground disturbance within 100 feet of the find shall be halted until the County coroner has been notified. If the coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC to identify the most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans. Project-related ground disturbance in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the process detailed in §15064.5 (e) has been completed.

DOCUMENTATION:

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