

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**  
Coachella Valley Water District  
Post Office Box 1058  
Coachella, California 92236

County Clerk  
County of Riverside  
Post Office Box 751  
Riverside, CA 92502

County of Imperial  
Imperial County Clerk/Recorder  
940 West Main Street, Suite 202  
El Centro, CA 92243

State Clearinghouse  
Office of Planning and Research  
Post Office Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County of San Diego  
Recorder/County Clerk's Office  
1600 Pacific Highway, Suite 260  
Post Office Box 121750  
San Diego, CA 92112-1750

Project Title: Coachella Valley Water District – System Conservation Implementation Agreement - Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program 2024-2026

Project Location: CVWD Service Area, Riverside County,

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed action consists of CVWD implementing a following program for the System Conservation Implementation Agreement- Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program under which CVWD will enter into agreements with participating growers and the Bureau of Reclamation. CVWD's conservation participation will take place within the CVWD service area for Colorado River Water irrigation service area which is located in the Eastern Coachella Valley, Eastern Riverside County. Under the program CVWD will compensate the participating growers in consideration for water that is conserved by the fallowing of the agricultural farmland with a history of irrigation. The water conserved will not be consumptively used by CVWD or other Colorado River contractors and will instead be made available by forbearance to assist in the management of reservoir levels in the Colorado River in the Lower Basin during current drought conditions. The program is intended to operate temporarily, conserving up to 10,000 Acre feet per year (AFY) in CVWD contributions in 2024, 2025, and 2026. CVWD on average provides approximately 245,000 AFY of Colorado River Water for agricultural irrigation. The program is not a long-term program intended to permanently change agricultural land use designations. The program is anticipated to begin in February 2024 and end in December 2026, but may be extended if drought conditions persist. A participating grower will be responsible for any required weed control and dust control on the fallowed land and will agree not to change land maintenance and crop cultivation practices on other lands within CVWD so as to result in an increased consumptive use of water on those lands. Participants in the program will be prohibited from shifting water use to pumped groundwater while in the fallowing program.

Lead Agency Approving Project and Contact: Coachella Valley Water District; William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor / Phone: (760) 398-2651

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION (Continued)  
Coachella Valley Water District

Exempt Status:

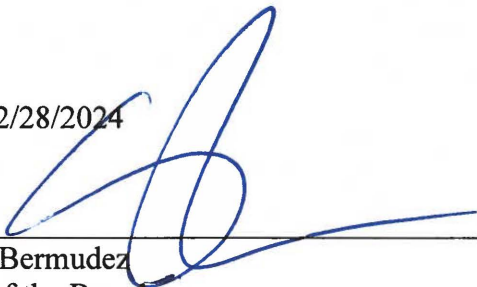
- Not a project:** State CEQA Guidelines §15378
- Review for Exemption/Common Sense Exemption:** State CEQA Guideline §15061(b)(3)
- Ministerial:** (Pub. Res. Code §21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guideline §15268)
- Declared Emergency:** (Pub. Res. Code §21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guideline §15269(a))
- Emergency Project:** (Pub. Res. Code §21080(b)(4); State CEQA Guideline §15269(b)(c))
- Statutory Exempt:** State CEQA Guidelines § 15277
- Categorically Exempt:** State CEQA Guidelines §15301

Reasons why project is exempt:

This program will not result in expansion of use of CVWD's existing irrigation distribution system or its irrigation drainage system. Accordingly, since the proposed program involves operation and implementation of CVWD's existing irrigation distribution facilities and irrigation drainage system facilities with no or negligible expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination, these actions qualify for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301).

Environmental impacts expected from the implementation of the *2007 Interim Guidelines For Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead (Guidelines)* were analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (refer to the following link (<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/strategies/FEIS/index.html>)). The proposed action of using conserved water from the proposed Conservation Program to assist in managing reservoir elevations is within the scope of analysis of actions that were previously analyzed in that EIS. Thus, to the extent the proposed actions involve or may affect areas outside of California, such as at Lake Mead or on the portions of the Colorado River in Nevada or Arizona, they are exempt from CEQA under a Statutory Exemption (Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(14) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15277). The proposed action of adopting the Coachella Valley Water District Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program for 204 through 2026 is exempt under the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Date: 2/28/2024



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Sylvia Bermudez  
Clerk of the Board

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

File No. 0423.25.1