

WIDREN WATER DISTRICT

DATE OF NOTICE: April 10, 2024

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
AND INTENT TO ADOPT
NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

Widren Water District (Widren), as Lead Agency, has prepared a Negative Declaration for the following proposed project and is inviting your comments regarding the adequacy of the document. The Negative Declaration, which includes technical appendices, has been placed in the Los Banos Branch of the Merced County Library, located at 1312 S 7th St. Los Banos, CA 93635. The Library's telephone number is (209) 826-5254. You may request an electronic copy of the Negative Declaration by emailing Widren Water District at WidrenWD@gmail.com.

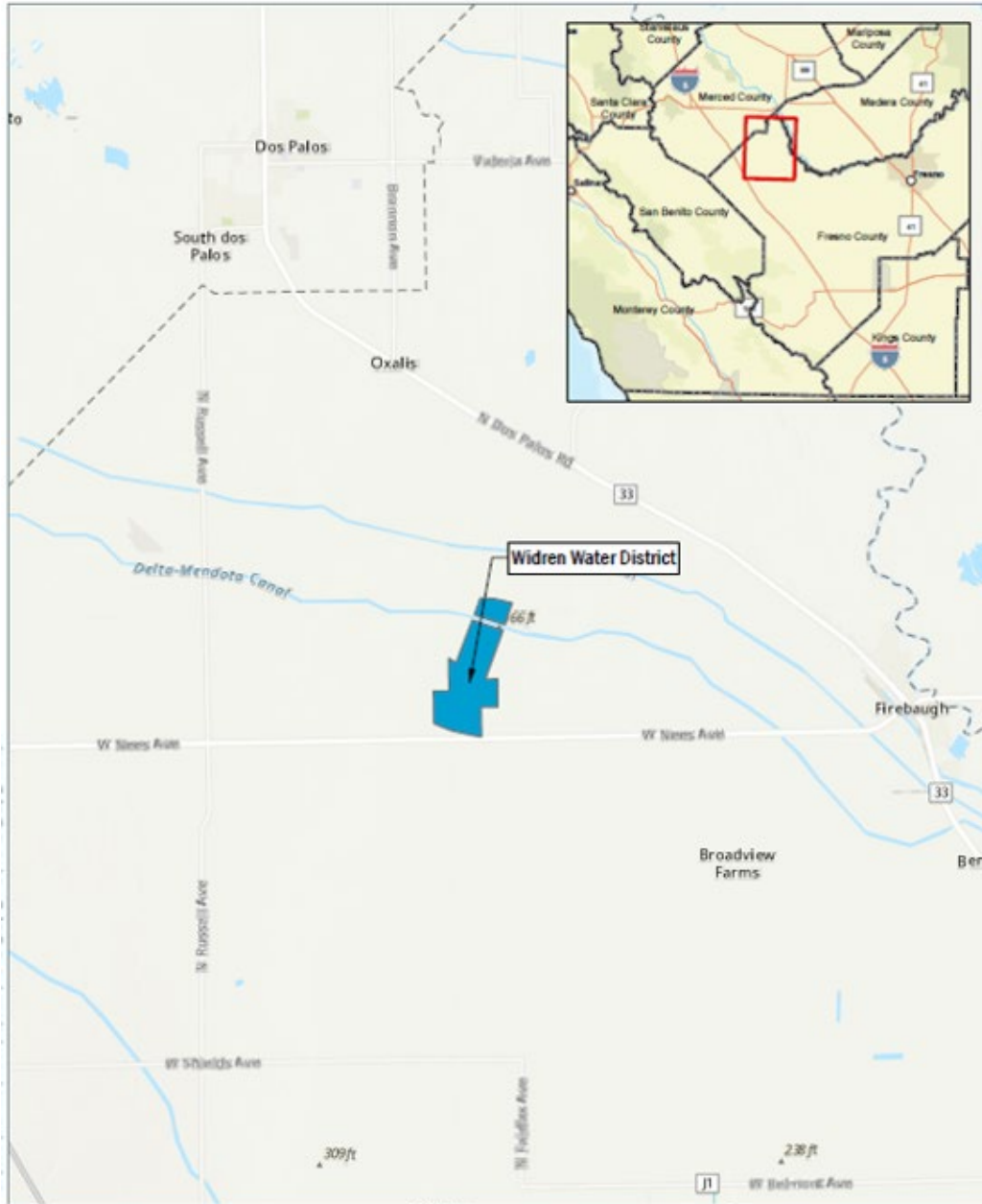
HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS: Written comments on this Negative Declaration must be received by close of business on Monday, May 13, 2024, to be included in the final document considered by the decision-making authorities. When submitting comments, please reference the project name, "Widren Water District Groundwater Water Quality, Supply, and Drainage Enhancement Program." Widren requests that all comments be provided electronically via email at: WidrenWD@gmail.com. However, if a hard copy submittal is necessary, it may be submitted to: Damian Aragona, Project Administrator, Widren Water District, 259 I Street, Los Banos, California, 93635.

Public Review Period: The public review period for the raft Negative Declaration is from April 11, 2024, to May 13, 2024.

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION:

- Project Name: Widren Water District Groundwater Water Quality, Supply, and Drainage Enhancement Program
- SCH No. _____ (Pending)
- Unincorporated Fresno County, approximately 6.54 miles west of Firebaugh

PROJECT LOCATION MAP:



PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Widren Water District Groundwater Water Quality, Supply, and Drainage Enhancement Program. The project proposes to annually extract up to 2,500 acre-feet of poor-quality groundwater from the perched groundwater table and treat that groundwater through reverse osmosis. The treated groundwater will either be introduced into the existing water distribution system operated by Firebaugh Canal Water District or introduced into the Delta-Mendota Canal. If the treated groundwater is introduced into Firebaugh's water distribution system it will be used within Firebaugh's service area, and 2,000 acre-feet of Central Valley

Project water will be made available by Firebaugh for transfer to Westlands Water District for use by individuals or entities that own land in both Widren and Westlands. If the treated groundwater is introduced into the Delta-Mendota Canal, a Warren Act Contract with Reclamation, and an exchange of water (non-Project for CVP) would be required. Reclamation would use the introduced non-Project water to meet downstream CVP demands and a like amount of CVP water would then be conveyed to Westlands or stored in San Luis Reservoir for later delivery to Westlands for use by individuals or entities that own land in both Widren and Westlands. Effluent or backflush water produced by the reverse osmosis treatment plant (estimated at 300 acre-feet) would be blended with up to 500 acre-feet of groundwater from the same existing well and then delivered to landowners within Widren through existing underground pipes, for irrigation of salt tolerant crops, which uptake salts and other constituents, in a Reuse Area. These landowners operate under the State Water Resources Control Board's Waste Discharge Requirements General Order (Order R5-2015-0095) for growers in the Grassland Drainage Area. This Order is part of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and regulates discharge to groundwater.

APPLICANT: Widren Water District

RECOMMENDED FINDING: The Negative Declaration determined the proposed project would not result in significant environmental effects.

AVAILABILITY IN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT: To request this Notice and/or the Negative Declaration in an alternative format, please email the Widren Water District at WidrenWD@gmail.com. Please include "Request for Copy of Widren Negative Declaration" in the subject line of your email. Your request also should include the suggested recommended format that will assist with the review of documents.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Widren Board of Directors will conduct a public hearing to receive oral comments at a special meeting on May 30, 2024, beginning at 4:00 p.m. The Board will consider adoption of the Negative Declaration at the special meeting on May 30, 2024, immediately following the hearing

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For environmental review information, or for information regarding public meetings/hearings on this project, contact Damian Aragona, Project Administrator, at (209) 826-0342. A Notice of Availability and Intent to Adopt Negative Declaration was published in The Kerman News and this Notice is being distributed on April 10, 2024.

Damian Aragona

Damian Aragona
Project Administrator
Widren Water District

April 10, 2024

Date