

RECEIVED

2024 MAY -8 A 10: 23

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Cc: State Clearinghouse

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
CLERK OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: Laguna County Sanitation District

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

APN: 113-240-005 **Case No.:** Not Applicable

Location: 3500 Black Road. Western terminus of Dutard Road of Black Road.

Project Title: Maintenance of Laguna County Sanitation District Wastewater Reclamation Plant Storage Ponds

Project Applicant: Laguna County Sanitation District

Project Description: The Laguna County Sanitation District’s wastewater reclamation plant serves the unincorporated areas of Santa Maria, portions of the city of Santa Maria, and the unincorporated community of Orcutt. The plant’s secondary treatment train feeds into a series of two ponds which are used to store water prior to tertiary filtration. Three additional ponds are connected and are designed to capture storm water to be sent back to headworks for treatment. These ponds were built over time and have junction boxes for transferring water from one pond to another. The junction boxes have slide gates to control water movement and associated piping between junction boxes. The project involves replacing seven slide gates and one pipeline. Figure 1 (below) shows a map of the area.

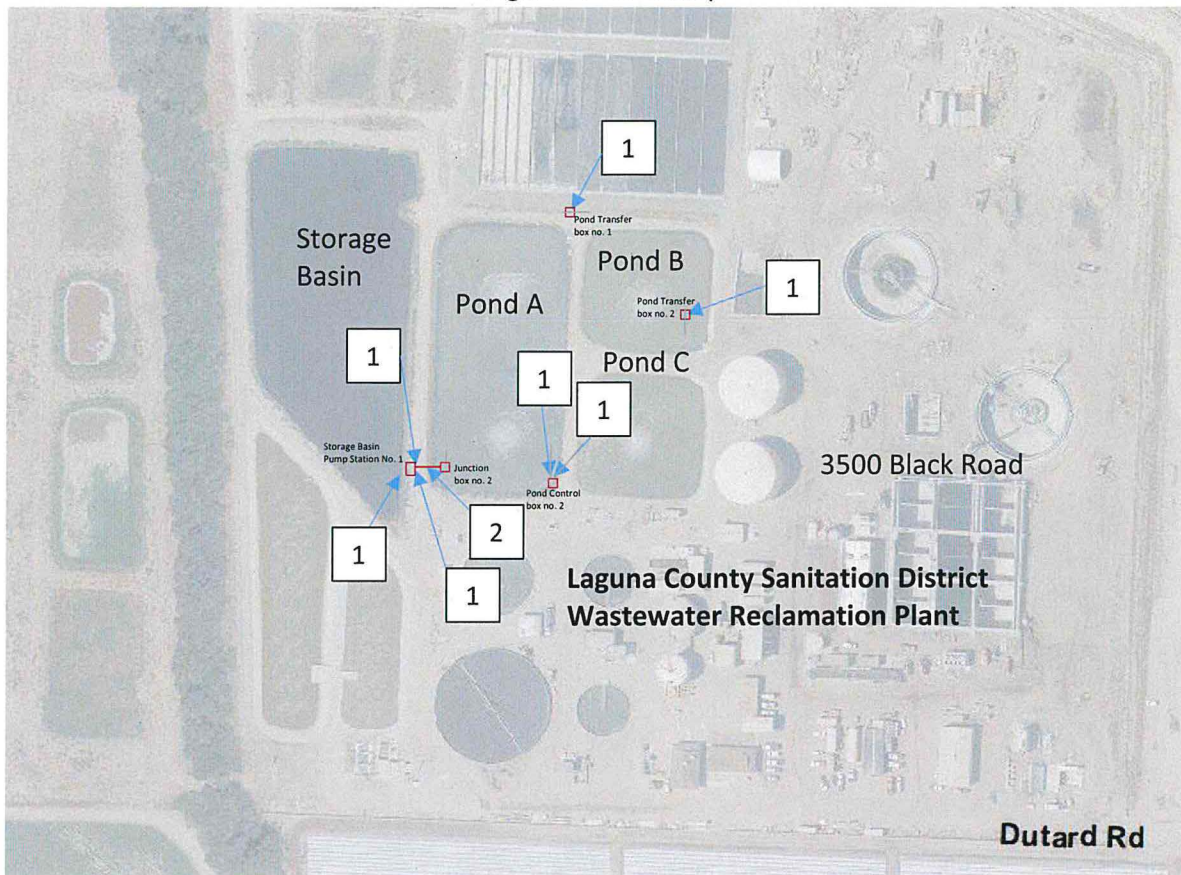
Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Laguna County Sanitation District Board of Directors

Name of Person or Entity Carrying Out Project: Laguna County Sanitation District

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

Figure 1 – Site Map



Legend:

- 1 – Replace existing slide gate with SS Waterman Style 250 gates
- 2 – Replace 45 LF of existing pipeline with 24" PVC C900

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guidelines Section: [cite section number and brief description or title of the exemption] Sections 15301, subdivision (a) (Existing Facilities), and 15302 (Replacement and Reconstruction) of the state CEQA Guidelines.

Reasons to support exemption findings: [discuss reasons for the exemption]

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 categorically exempts 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 including Interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances. CEQA Guidelines Section 15302, categorically exempts 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.

Notice of Exemption

Page 3

The Laguna County Sanitation District's wastewater reclamation plant serves the unincorporated areas of Santa Maria, portions of the city of Santa Maria, and the unincorporated community of Orcutt. The treatment plant has successfully served its community since its conception in 1959. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(a) and 15302, the project involves the repair and maintenance of existing facilities at this permitted wastewater reclamation facility, including the replacement of existing slide gates and piping between existing wastewater storage ponds that have been identified as needing replacement. The gates and piping will be installed on the same site as the existing facilities, will have the same purpose and capacity and will no change or expand the use or function of the wastewater storage ponds.

The proposed project does not involve unusual circumstances, including future activities, resulting in or which might reasonably result in significant impacts which threaten the environment. The exceptions to the categorical exemptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines are:

- (a) 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 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.**

CEQA Guideline 15301 is a Class 1 exemption and 15302 is a Class 2 exemption; therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.**

The Wastewater Reclamation Facility has recently undergone a plant upgrade involving replacing its headworks and secondary treatment train with new activated sludge basins. This most recent plant upgrade replaced facilities that were beyond their useful lives and were exhibiting structural deficiencies. These upgrades were analyzed under CEQA in Wastewater Reclamation Plant Facilities Master Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (17NGD-00000-000-15) adopted by the Board of Directors on July 3, 2018. The facilities being replaced under this project were not included in that prior environmental review. However, the current project involves different facilities (slide gates and pipelines), in a different location than the plant upgrades, and would not contribute to cumulative impacts. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (c) 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.**

Notice of Exemption

Page 4

The project involves repairs to allow the existing wastewater storage ponds to function properly to ensure proper treatment of the community's wastewater. The proposed project is within potential habitat for the California tiger salamander and the California red-legged frog. Work would be conducted in compliance with Final Habitat Conservation Plan and Incidental Take Permit (ITP Number TE16913C) with applicable avoidance measures implemented during the repair/replacement work. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (d) 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. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.**

The project involves the repair and replacement of existing wastewater facilities. It does not involve a scenic highway or damage to scenic resources. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (e) 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 Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.**

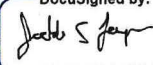
The project involves gates and piping associated with existing wastewater storage ponds and is not on an area listed as a hazardous waste site. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (f) 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.**

The project involves gates and piping associated with wastewater storage ponds in existing disturbed areas and no historical resources would be impacted. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Kevin Thompson, P.E., Interim Utilities Manager

Phone #: 805-803-8756

DocuSigned by:

 A213A30A21CC4F7...

Department/Division Representative: Joddi Leipner, Engineer Environmental Team Leader

Date: March 27, 2024

Acceptance Date: _____

Date Filed by County Clerk: _____