

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

**From:**  
United Water Conservation District  
1701 North Lombard Street, Suite 200  
Oxnard, CA 93030

Ventura County Clerk  
800 South Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Project Title:** Santa Felicia Dam 72-inch Butterfly Valve Redundancy and Seismic Resiliency Project

**Project Location:** Santa Felicia Dam at Lake Piru, Ventura County, California (Assessor Parcel Number 016021003).

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project (Lead Agency):** United Water Conservation District

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** United Water Conservation District

**Project Description:** United Water Conservation District (United) proposes the installation of a supplemental manually operated hydraulic power unit (HPU) for the 72-inch butterfly valve at the Santa Felicia Dam (SFD) and the reinforcement and realignment of segments of the existing hydraulic pipelines inside of the Santa Felicia Dam outlet works tunnel to ensure seismic resiliency (Project). The Project is an interim risk reduction measure developed by United to mitigate dam safety risks, as required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The addition of the supplemental HPU will provide redundant or alternative operation of the SFD 72-inch butterfly valve in the event that the existing HPU is rendered inaccessible by an uncontrolled release of water emanating from a rupture in the 60-inch steel penstock following a seismic event. The additional HPU would be housed inside a metal cabinet that would be founded on a six-foot by six-foot by six-inch concrete pad on the toe of the SFD. Approximately two 200-foot stainless steel hydraulic pipelines housed inside one SCH 80 PVC conduit would be routed from the supplemental HPU west towards the outlet works tunnel where the pipelines would tie into the existing hydraulic pipelines that convey hydraulic fluid to the SFD 72-inch butterfly valve.

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**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
  - Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
  - Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
  - Categorical Exemptions: Class 1, Guidelines § 15301 – Existing Facilities;  
Class 3, Guidelines § 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small  
Structures
  - Statutory Exemption
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**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:** The Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.) Section 15301 *Existing Facilities* (Class 1) and Section 15303 *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures* (Class 3).

The section 15301 *Existing Facilities* exemption “consists of 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 key consideration under a section 15301 exemption is whether a project involves negligible or no expansion of use. Examples of projects that are exempt under section 15301 include the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing facilities of both investor and publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power.

The section 15303 *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures* exemption consists of the “construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.”

The SFD is an existing, publicly-owned facility that provides electric power. The Project involves minor alterations to the SFD and the installation of small new equipment at the SFD. The Project involves negligible or no expansion of existing or former use at the SFD.

None of the exceptions to categorical exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Maryam Bral, Chief Engineer  
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Marissa Caringella  
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United Water Conservation District

5-20-2024

Date

Date OPR received for filing: \_\_\_\_\_