



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, California 95814**

**From: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
P.O. Box 54153
Los Angeles, California 90054-0153**

Project Name: Grant an Option Agreement to AES for a Long-Term Lease for Carbon Energy Production

Project Location (Specific): Palo Verde Mesa

Project Location (City): Southwest of the city of Blythe

Project Location - County: Riverside

Description of Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California proposes to grant an option agreement with The AES Corporation, LLC, for a long-term lease of up to 6,742 acres of land in the Palo Verde Valley, California for possible carbon-free energy production and storage purposes, contingent upon further project permits and approvals. See attached map.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Exempt Status: *(check as applicable)*

- Ministerial (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guidelines
- Not a Project (Public Resources Code § 21065, State CEQA Guidelines § 15378)
- Declared Emergency (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guidelines)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(2); State CEQA Guidelines)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(4); State CEQA Guidelines)
- Categorical Exemption, Class 1, State CEQA Guidelines §15301, Class 6, State CEQA Guidelines §15306
- Statutory Exemption, State CEQA Guidelines
- Other, State CEQA Guidelines

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed action is exempt from CEQA because the action consists of an option to lease existing public lands or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use and no possibility of significantly impacting the physical environment. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301). In addition, the proposed action consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15306). All required CEQA review, and determinations will occur prior to final approval and implementation of the project in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Lilia I. Martínez at (213) 217-5656

Signature: Diane Doesserich
Team Manager
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Date: June 12, 2024

Date received for filing:

LOCATION MAP

