

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

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

From: California Department of Water Resources
San Luis Field Division, 31770 Gonzaga Road
Gustine, CA 95322

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources

Project Title: California Aqueduct, Reach 2B Communication Line Repair

Project Location City & County: Merced County

Project Location – Specific: Work will occur in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way from about California Aqueduct (Aqueduct) milepost (MP) 64.80 right (R) to MP 65.00R. The center of the work site is about 1.04 miles north of where Romero Creek crosses the Aqueduct and about 3.04 miles northwest of the intersection of State Route 33 and Interstate 5.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: MCI WorldCom will repair a damaged fiber optics communication line located between MP 64.80R and MP 65.00R in DWR's San Luis Field Division's boundaries. This line helps run facilities operated by DWR's Delta Field Division; the repair is necessary to restore lost communication ability. The State Water Project will benefit from this project.

To perform the repair, an approximate 3-foot wide by 4-foot deep by 0.2-mile long trench will be dug to expose the damaged fiber optic line, about 469 cubic yards of material will be excavated. Two or three pull boxes will be installed along the exposed fiber optic line. New fiber optic cables will be put in place by pulling them through the pull boxes, and then the new cables will be spliced to the existing fiber optic line. Any open trenches will be coned off and covered with plywood or metal plates. Equipment and utility vehicles will park along the side of the Aqueduct Road. After the repairs are made, the excavation will be backfilled with the excavated material, compacted, and contoured to match the original grade.

Exempt/Suspend Status:

- Ministerial (§21080[b][1]; 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Proclamation of a State of Emergency Due to Drought)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080[b][4]; California Code of Regulations §15269[c])
- Categorical Exemption: 15301(b) – Existing Facilities and 15304(f) – Minor Alterations to Land (Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored)
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: MCI WorldCom will repair an existing damaged fiber optics communication line; the repairs will involve negligible or no expansion of existing or former use of the line. Work will not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees, and the area will be contoured to match the original grade. Categorical Exemption 15301 – Existing Facilities and 15304(f) – Minor Alterations to Land (Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored) apply.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Water Resources

Contact Person: Cody Nelson

Telephone: 209-827-5190

Signature: Cody Nelson **Date:** 10/30/2024 **Title:** Planner Scheduler/UC Supv.

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant