

## Notice of Exemption

**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

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**Project Title:** California Aqueduct Reaches 4, 5, 6, and 7 Westlands Water District Utility Pole Replacements

**Project Location City and County:** Fresno and Kings Counties

**Project Location, Specific:** Work will occur at 14 utility poles at Westlands Water District (WWD) turnouts in Reaches 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct). The turnouts are on the right (R) and left sides (L) of the Aqueduct in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way. The work sites are at Aqueduct mileposts (MP): MP 108.46R, MP 129.88L, MP 131.70L, MP 133.81L, MP 134.94L, MP 138.29L, MP 139.39L, MP 140.57L, MP 141.60L, MP 145.26L, MP 151.19R, MP 158.47R, MP 164.79R, and MP 167.86R. The northernmost site, MP 108.46R, is about 0.33 miles northwest of the intersection of the Aqueduct and South Fairfax Avenue. MP 167.86R, the southernmost site, is about 0.50 miles southeast of the intersection of the Aqueduct and Plymouth Avenue.

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** During recent inspections, WWD identified 14 of its existing utility poles that show signs of failure. The poles are in the DWR right of way and WWD requests encroachment permission from DWR to anchor or replace 14 of them.

At the sites where the pole will be replaced, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) will first de-energize the existing overhead electrical conductors (OVC), the OVC will be detached from the pole, and a crane will be used to remove the pole from its hole. The pole will be loaded onto a trailer and disposed of offsite. Once the pole is removed, WWD contractors will use an auger to expand the existing hole to about 18 inches in diameter and 7.5 feet deep. A new pole made of similar material will be installed into the hole, and the excavated area around the pole will be backfilled and compacted to match the original grade. Then, PG&E will connect the OVC to the new pole.

At the sites where the anchor will be installed, the existing pole will remain in place. To perform the work, PG&E will first de-energize the existing OVC. A self-drilling auger head will be used to drill an 18-inch diameter anchor about 6.5 feet deep into the ground approximately 12 feet from the base of the pole; the anchor eyelet will remain above ground. A guy wire will be attached to the anchor eyelet, clamped to the top of the existing pole, and tightened to create tension. If needed, the area around the newly installed anchor will be compacted.

The final step of this work is to re-energize the OVC. Work is necessary to ensure safe, reliable electrical service to WWD. WWD and its Contractors will benefit.

**Public Agency Approving Project:** Department of Water Resources, as Responsible Agency

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

**Exempt Status:** (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

Categorical Exemption: 15305(b) Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations – Issuance of Minor Encroachment Permits

Statutory Exemptions. State code number(s):

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**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:** WWD requests encroachment permission to have fourteen of its existing utility poles replaced or anchored at WWD turnouts in the DWR right of way. As the Responsible Agency, DWR will issue an encroachment permit for this work. Work will occur in areas with an average slope of less than 20 percent and will not result in any changes in land use or density; Categorical Exemption 15305 (b) (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations - Issuance of minor encroachment permits) applies.

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**Responsible Agency Contact:**

Signature: Cody Nelson Date: 11/7/2024

Printed Name: Cody Nelson      Title: Planner/Scheduler/UC Supervisor      Phone: (209) 827-5190