

## 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 6 Vegetation Management

**Project Location City & County:** Fresno County

**Project Location—Specific:** Work will occur in Reach 6 of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct) in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way on both the right (R) and left (L) sides of the Aqueduct. Work will occur in approximately 55 feet-wide areas along the Aqueduct toe roads in the following areas: Aqueduct milepost (MP) 143.45L to MP 144.23L, MP 144.78L to MP 145.37L, MP 147.75L to MP 148.14L, MP 149.05R to MP 149.25R, and MP 149.90R to MP 150.90R. The northernmost work site, MP 143.45L, is about 0.31 miles northeast of the intersection of the Aqueduct and State Route (SR) 145. The southernmost work site, MP 150.90R, is about 0.83 miles northwest of the intersection of the Aqueduct and SR 269.

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** San Luis Field Division (SLFD) will use an excavator equipped with a standard digging bucket and a hydraulic thumb attachment to mechanically remove vegetation within the work sites that is shorter than 8 feet tall; the vegetation is predominantly honey mesquite (*Neotoma odorata*). Vegetation taller than 8 feet will be left in place, but any limbs up to 8 feet off the ground will be removed. The removed material will be piled on site; the piles will be burned when there is an authorized burn day under SLFD's burn permit. The sites will be accessed using the existing Aqueduct asphalt and toe roads. All work will occur outside the nesting season.

Overgrown vegetation prevents SLFD from being able to visually inspect the Aqueduct embankments; work is necessary for SLFD to inspect and maintain the Aqueduct and DWR right of way. The State Water Project will benefit from this work.

### 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(h) (Existing Facilities – Maintenance of existing native growth)
- Statutory Exemptions:

**Reasons Why Project Is Exempt:** Work involves maintenance of existing native vegetation in the DWR right of way to improve visual inspection of the Aqueduct embankments. There will be no expansion of existing or former use of the Aqueduct or toe roads. Categorical Exemption 15301(h) (Existing Facilities – maintenance of existing native growth) applies.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** DWR

**Contact Person:** Cody Nelson

**Telephone:** (209) 827-5190

**Signature:** Cody Nelson **Date:** 11/26/2024 **Title:** Planner/Scheduler/UC Supv.

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant