

## 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:** CA Dept. of Water Resources  
1416 9th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Lead Agency:** California Department of Water Resources

**Project Title:** Turlock and James Irrigation District Alternate Technical Support Services Well Installation Project

**Project Location City & County:** Merced and Fresno Counties

**Project Location – Specific:** The Project will occur in Merced and Fresno Counties, with two monitoring wells: ETGSA-03 (Magneson Property) is approximately 1,500 feet south of El Capitan Way, west of Alves Road. This well is located on private property. JIDGSA-01 (James ID) is approximately 1 mile south of Manning Avenue and 1 mile east of Calaveras Avenue. This well is located on private property.

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law requiring local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage groundwater in their service area that necessitates the development of an adequate network of appropriately spaced groundwater monitoring wells. With secured funding, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has established the Technical Support Services (TSS) program to help GSAs meet their SGMA requirements by providing services to install groundwater monitoring wells, conduct downhole video logging, and training on methods to accurately monitor groundwater levels.

This well installation project consists of installing two nested groundwater monitoring wells. A truck-mounted drill rig will be used to drill a pilot hole while using a mud cleaner to filter out solids and return drilling mud to the drill bit. The pilot hole will be drilled to a depth up to 600 feet below ground surface. Based on logging results, the borehole will be expanded to the selected depth with a diameter up to 14 inches. Within the borehole PVC casings, sand, and a bentonite seal will be constructed. For a final sanitary seal, neat cement will be pumped from the support truck to fill the annular space between the casings and the borehole wall to a depth required by the local well permitting process. A raised steel well protective cover and concrete pad, approximately four feet by four feet in area and four inches tall with four 4-foot high metal crash posts, will be installed at ground level to protect the well.

Well development will occur a minimum of 72 hours after completion of the sanitary seal. Well development is done to remove any fine-grained materials from the well. After completion of each monitoring well, battery powered pressure transducers and data loggers will be installed to measure continuous groundwater levels.

DWR anticipates that well installation will take approximately 2 months at each location from March 2025 to November 2025. Construction equipment would include pickup trucks, forklift, drill rig, mud cleaner, and a generator.

DWR or GSA staff may visit the wells on a quarterly schedule to collect data. Operation and maintenance will be minimal and may consist of periodic servicing of equipment and replacing batteries as needed. Access to the well locations will be by existing paved and dirt roads.

Once installed, these facilities will become part of the GSA's monitoring program.

**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: 15306. Information Collection
- Statutory Exemptions:

**Reasons Why Project Is Exempt:** Work activities will consist of installation of two groundwater monitoring well. Project activities are covered under Categorical Exemption Class 6 Section 15306 (Data Collection) of the California Environmental Quality Act. No sensitive biological or cultural resources have been identified in the area.

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

**Contact Person:** Steven Springhorn

**Telephone:**(916) 651-9273

**Signature:** Steven Springhorn **Date:** 12/12/2024 **Title:** Supervising Eng. Geologist

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant