

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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

County Clerk

County of: Monterey

168 West Alisal, 1st Floor

Salinas, CA 93901

From: (Public Agency): Marina Coast Water District
11 Reservation Road, Marina, CA 93933

(Address)

Project Title: Monterey Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Monitoring Wells Project

Project Applicant: Marina Coast Water District

Project Location - Specific:

APN 031-251-066-000 (City of Marina) and 031-161-042-000 (County of Monterey)

Project Location - City: Marina and unincorporated County land Project Location - County: Monterey

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The MCWD is installing three (3) monitoring wells in the City of Marina and one (1) monitoring well in unincorporated Monterey County. The monitoring wells would be used to fill identified data gaps in the Monterey Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), support sustainable groundwater management and meet GSP objectives. The Monterey Subbasin GSP has identified data gaps in the groundwater elevation and seawater intrusion within the 400-Foot Aquifer and the Deep Aquifer. To address these data gaps, the GSP proposed Project M4 - Drill and Construct Monitoring Wells, and is included in the work plan of the MCWD's Proposition Round 2 Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Grant. The grant was awarded in 2023 and funds the planning, design, and construction of the monitoring wells with completion anticipated by 2026. The monitoring wells would be screened in the 400-foot and Deep Aquifers, ranging from 470 to 1,450 feet deep.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Marina Coast Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Marina Coast 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. State type and section number: 15303(d), 15306, 15061(b)(3)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Section 15303(d) categorically exempts limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, specifically utilities. The proposed project would involve the installation of four new groundwater wells and two locations, with a total footprint of less than 50 square feet. Section 15306 categorically exempts data collection and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The proposed monitoring wells would fill identified data gaps in the Monterey Subbasin GSP. Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) categorically exempts projects where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. The proposed project involves collecting data pertaining to groundwater elevation and seawater intrusion within the 400-Foot Aquifer and the Deep Aquifer. The construction of the proposed project would require minimal ground disturbance of less than 1 acre total, which would not result in any significant impacts to environmental resources (Attachment A). The operation of the proposed wells would involve collecting data and would not have any physical impact on the environment. The data would support groundwater management and meeting Monterey Subbasin GSP objectives. The project would improve the existing groundwater monitoring network by installing new infrastructure, but would not involve the expansion of existing use or result in any significant effects to the environment. Lastly, none of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 would be triggered. Specifically, for Classes 3 and 6, the project locations are not particularly sensitive and are located in disturbed areas. There are no unusual circumstances related to the proposed project. The proposed project is not located within a state scenic highway or a hazardous waste site, and the site does not contain any historical resources that would be impacted. No other similar projects are proposed in the same place that over time, would result in cumulative impacts. Therefore, the project is exempt under CEQA.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Patrick Breen Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 831-883-5951

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Patrick Breen Date: 1/14/25 Title: Water Resources Manager

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

ATTACHMENT A

Monterey Subbasin Monitoring Wells Project Regulatory Compliance and Best Management Practices for the F Tank Monitoring Well

The Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) is proposing to install and operate three monitoring wells to fill identified data gaps in the groundwater elevation and seawater intrusion within the 400-Foot Aquifer and the Deep Aquifer; two wells at the 4th Street site and one at the F Tank site. The F Tank Monitoring Well site is located in a disturbed area within MCWD's easement; however, it is located adjacent to a habitat reserve area. To ensure impacts to biological resources are avoided and minimized, the following regulatory compliance measures and Best Management Practices will be implemented during construction at the F Tank site:

1. In compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code section 3513, to avoid impacts to nesting birds, construction shall commence prior to the nesting season (February 1 through September 15). If this is not possible, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 15 days prior to the commencement of construction activities in all areas that may provide suitable nesting habitat within 300 feet of the project boundary. If nesting birds are identified during the pre-construction survey, an appropriate buffer shall be imposed within which no construction activities or disturbance will take place (generally 300 feet in all directions). A qualified biologist shall be on-site during work re-initiation in the vicinity of the nest offset to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. No work shall proceed in the vicinity of an active nest until such time as all young are fledged, or until after September 15 (when young are assumed fledged).
2. A qualified biologist shall conduct an Employee Education Program for the construction crew prior to any construction activities. The qualified biologist shall meet with the construction crew at the onset of construction at the project site to educate the construction crew on the following: 1) the appropriate access route(s) in and out of the construction area and review project boundaries; 2) how a biological monitor will examine the area and agree upon a method which will ensure the safety of the monitor during such activities, 3) the identification of special-status species that may be present; 4) the specific mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the construction effort; 5) the general provisions and protections afforded; and 6) the proper procedures if a special-status species is encountered within the project site to avoid impacts.
3. A qualified biologist will survey the proposed project area and immediately adjacent areas 48 hours before and the morning of the onset of work activities for the presence of California tiger salamander (CTS). If any life stage of CTS is observed, construction activities will not commence until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) are consulted and appropriate actions are taken to allow project activities to begin. The qualified biologist shall remain on site and monitor construction

activities until all ground disturbing activities are completed. If any life stage of CTS is found and these individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, work shall stop and the Service and/or CDFW shall be contacted. Construction activities will not resume until the Service and/or CDFW are consulted and appropriate actions are taken to allow project activities to continue.

4. The qualified biologist shall complete a daily log summarizing activities and environmental compliance throughout the duration of the construction.
5. To prevent inadvertent entrapment of CTS during project construction, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep will be covered at the close of each working day with plywood or similar materials. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they will be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.
6. Only tightly woven fiber netting or similar material may be used for erosion control at the project site. Coconut coir matting is an acceptable erosion control material. No plastic monofilament matting will be used for erosion control, as this material may ensnare wildlife, including CTS.
7. Because dusk and dawn are often the times when CTS are most actively foraging and dispersing, all construction activities should cease one half hour before sunset and should not begin prior to one half hour after sunrise.
8. All trash that may attract predators shall be properly contained, removed from the construction site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris shall be removed from work areas.