

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 5 Road Grading and Vegetation Removal

Project Location City & County: Fresno County

Project Location – Specific: Work will be in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way (ROW) on the left side (L) of the California Aqueduct (Aqueduct). Work will occur in approximately 90-foot-wide areas along the Aqueduct embankments and Aqueduct roads in the following areas of Aqueduct Reach 5: Aqueduct milepost (MP) 108.97L to MP 109.46L, MP 110.08L to MP 111.91L, and MP 113.82L to MP 115.98L. The northernmost work area, MP 108.97L, is about 0.18 miles southeast of the intersection of the Aqueduct and South Fairfax Avenue. The southernmost work area, MP 115.98L, is about 1.52 miles northwest of the intersection of the Aqueduct and Manning Avenue.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: SLFD will use a motor grader to grade the existing Aqueduct road from MP 113.82L to MP 115.98L. The grader's blade will cut the washboard and potholes from the road and use the existing road base material from the road's shoulder to restore the road to the proper grade. A water truck will spray water onto the graded road, and the water truck and motor grader will then use their tires to compact the materials. Once the road is compacted, a final application of water will be sprayed onto it so that the materials bond correctly.

From MP 108.97L to MP 109.46L and from MP 110.08L to MP 111.91L, vegetation will be removed from along the Aqueduct embankment. The vegetation will be removed from the Aqueduct embankment and up to 60 feet from the Aqueduct toe road shoulders. The motor grader will use its blade to remove the vegetation, but the blade will remain 2 inches above the ground. Any vegetation that cannot be reached by the motor grader will be removed by a backhoe with a clamshell bucket attachment. The removed vegetation will be stockpiled onsite and burned in compliance with the Fresno County burn permit. After the vegetation is removed and stockpiled, the motor grader will reestablish the Aqueduct embankment toe road by using the existing material in the ROW. Similar methods to those applied to grading the Aqueduct road from MP 113.82L to MP 115.98L will be used to grade the toe road.

Road repairs will let vehicles access the Aqueduct for maintenance activities, and vegetation removal will let SLFD visually inspect the Aqueduct embankment and ROW for damages. By making these repairs, SLFD will be able to safely maintain and inspect the Aqueduct and DWR ROW. 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 (Existing Facilities) and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land)
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: Work consists of grading the existing Aqueduct roads and removing overgrown vegetation from the DWR ROW. No healthy, mature, scenic trees will be removed and there will be no expansion of existing or former use of the Aqueduct embankment and roads. Categorical Exemptions 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) apply.

Contact Person: Mark McDaniel

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Signed by Lead Agency

Name: Mark McDaniel **Signature:** Mark McDaniel **Date:** 1/29/2025