

Notice of Exemption

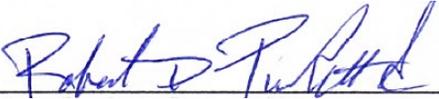
TO: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation PO Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Siskiyou County Clerk 510 N. Main St. Yreka, CA 96097	FROM: Hornbrook Community Services District PO Box 29 Hornbrook, CA 96044
Project Title: Hornbrook CSD Water Treatment Improvements Project	
Project Location: The project is located within the unincorporated community of Hornbrook in northern Siskiyou County, ~6.5 miles south of the Oregon border, in Sections 20 and 29, Township 47 North, Range 6 West of the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) Hornbrook 7.5-minute quadrangle (see Figure 1). As shown in Figures 2 and 3 , improvements would occur at several locations within the Hornbrook Community Services District (HCSD) service area. <u>WTP and Tank 1 Site:</u> The WTP and Tank 1 are located on Siskiyou County owned property near the northern extent of Bradley-Henley Road, west of Interstate 5 (I-5). Siskiyou County Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 040-130-090. <u>Tank 2 Site:</u> Tank 2 is located on District owned property on the east side of Bradley-Henley Road, generally west of I-5, south of Ranchera Creek Road and north of Ash Creek Road. APN 040-300-040. <u>Well 1</u> is located on District owned property ~0.3 miles southwest of the WTP and Tank 1 Site. Access to the site is from a private graveled roadway off of Bradley-Henley Road. APN 040-170-120. <u>Well 4</u> is located on District owned property, east of the intersection of Bradley-Henley Road and Ash Creek Road, west of I-5. APN 040-300-040. <u>Pressure Reducing Valves (PRVs).</u> As shown in Figure 3 , PRVs would be installed on ~47 lower elevation water services throughout the HCSD service area.	
City: Hornbrook (Unincorporated)	County: Siskiyou
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The purpose of the proposed project is to replace damaged and aging infrastructure, improve fire flows, and ensure a safe and reliable water source for existing customers in the HCSD. Proposed improvements are described in Attachment A .	
Public Agency Approving and Carrying Out Project:	Hornbrook Community Services District
Agency Contact Person, Phone, and Email:	Robert Puckett, General Manager 530.598.9609 rdpuckettsr@hotmail.com
Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (CEQA Guidelines): Class 1, §15301 (Existing Facilities) Class 2, §15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction) Class 3, §15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)	

Reason Why Project is Exempt:

Class 1 covers the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. Class 2 covers the replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity. Class 3 covers the construction and location of new, small facilities or structures (up to 2,500 square feet in floor area in rural areas) that do not involve the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures.

The project is consistent with these categorical exemptions because work would consist of installation of PRVs on existing water services and minor alterations to an existing water intake structure. The new (replacement) water tanks would be located on the same sites as the existing tanks; although both tanks would be larger than the existing tanks, larger tanks are required to meet current standards for public water systems rather than to accommodate future growth. The new wellhouses would be located in the same location as the existing structures. The new WTP would not exceed the square footage threshold for the Class 3 exemption, and would not involve the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances.

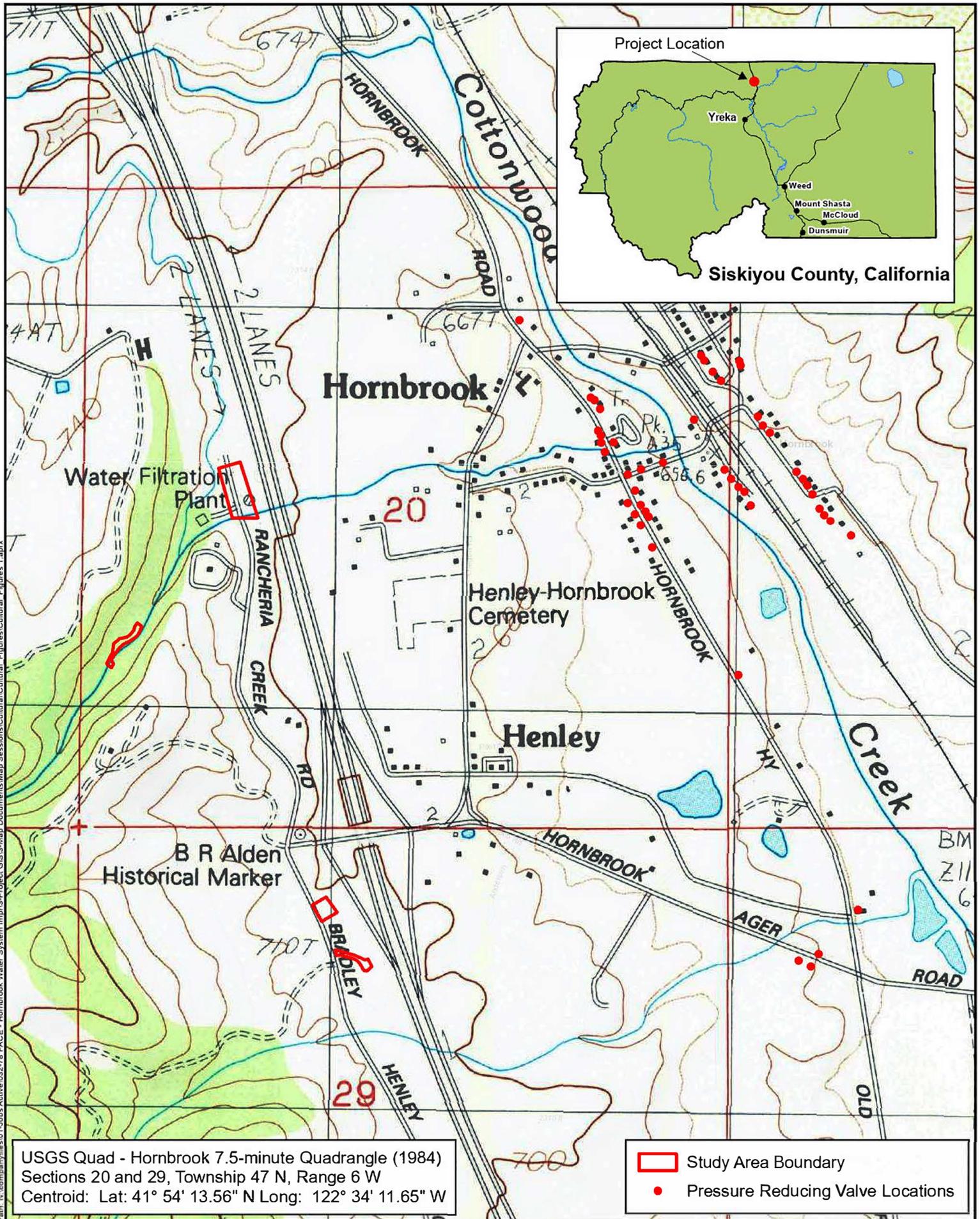
As documented in **Attachment B**, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; would not result in damage to scenic resources within a Scenic Highway; is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code; would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource; and would not result in cumulative impacts.

Signature: 
Robert Puckett, General Manager
Hornbrook Community Services District

Date: March 22, 2025

Attachments:

- Figure 1: Project Location and Vicinity
- Figure 2: Project Sites
- Figure 3: Pressure Reducing Valve Locations
- Attachment A: Project Description
- Attachment B: Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption



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USGS Quad - Hornbrook 7.5-minute Quadrangle (1984)
 Sections 20 and 29, Township 47 N, Range 6 W
 Centroid: Lat: 41° 54' 13.56" N Long: 122° 34' 11.65" W

- Study Area Boundary
- Pressure Reducing Valve Locations



Figure 1

Project Location and Vicinity

All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 03.05.25





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All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 02.21.25



Figure 2
Project Sites



All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 02.21.25



Figure 3
PRV Locations

ATTACHMENT A
Project Description
Hornbrook Community Services District
Water Treatment Improvements Project

The Hornbrook Community Services District's Water Treatment Improvements project includes the following components:

Water Treatment Plant Site:

- A new ~1,000-square-foot Water Treatment Plant (WTP) building, ~16 feet in height, would be constructed north of the existing filter and control building. The building would be a concrete masonry unit (CMU) structure with a metal roof. The new WTP building would house filters, instruments for water quality testing (chlorine analyzer, turbidimeter), and various mechanical equipment, piping, valves, and electrical controls.
- Improvements for surface water and groundwater treatment would be completed, including installation of a steel shell silicate sand-filled pressure filter for removal of iron and manganese from groundwater. The surface water treatment improvements would consist of a cartridge filter train consisting of two filters: a pre-filter, and a final filter. The sand pressure filters would also be used as surface water roughing filters during periods of high turbidity to increase the performance and life of the cartridge filters.
- Sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) pumps and appurtenances would be installed for pre- and post-disinfection.
- Instrumentation (chlorine analyzer and turbidimeter) would be installed for water quality testing.
- A new filter backwash pump station would be installed. The system backwash and WTP instrumentation waters would be discarded to the backwash pond without recycling.
- A new domestic water booster pump station would be installed to convey water to the CALFIRE Station and the USDA Agricultural Inspection Station.
- Pending funding availability, the existing filter, pumps, piping, and associated appurtenances at the existing filter and control building would be demolished, and improvements to the existing building would be completed, including painting, installing siding, installing security lighting, etc. A new water service and water spigot would be installed, and associated piping improvements would be completed.
- The ground surface around the existing filter and control building would be restored by leveling the area around the building and installing ~280 cubic yards of aggregate base.
- The existing ~120,000-gallon below-grade concrete Tank 1 at the WTP site would be demolished and replaced with a ~180,000-gallon above-ground welded steel tank in the same location. The tank would be ~36 feet in diameter with a height of ~27 feet. The tank would be installed on a concrete foundation. Aggregate base would be installed around the foundation. Miscellaneous drainage improvements, including installation of a rock-lined drainage swale, would be completed.

Improvements associated with Tank 1 include installation of a recirculation pump and spray aeration header to promote off-gassing of the groundwater; an internal tank-level transmitter; various piping and plumbing improvements; electrical equipment and controls; and associated appurtenances. Combination air vacuum (CAV) valves would be installed to reduce dissolved gases. A permanent bypass would be installed around Tank 1 to allow the WTP to bypass the tank and supply the distribution system and Tank 2.
- A permanent emergency back-up generator with an automatic transfer switch would be installed on a concrete pad adjacent to the new WTP building. Two propane tanks would be installed on concrete pads in proximity to the generator.

- A new portable 80-kilowatt (kW) emergency back-up generator would be stored at the WTP for use at the well sites.
- Improvements to the backwash pond would be completed, including minor grading and top-of-bank improvements. Depending on final design, a liner may be installed and/or the pond may be slightly enlarged.
- Pending funding availability, photovoltaic (PV) solar panels would be installed on the roof of the WTP building.
- A new power pole would be installed on the south side of the existing WTP driveway; electrical conduit would be installed underground from the power pole to the new WTP building.
- Chain link fencing would be installed around the WTP site. A security system would be installed.

Tank 2 Site:

- The existing ~120,000-gallon below-grade concrete Tank 2 would be demolished and replaced with a ~180,000-gallon above-ground welded steel tank in the same location. The tank would be ~36 feet in diameter with a height of ~27 feet. The tank would be installed on a concrete foundation. Aggregate base would be installed around the foundation.
- Improvements associated with Tank 2 include installation of an internal tank-level transmitter, various piping and plumbing improvements, electrical and controls, and associated appurtenances.
- Chain link fencing would be installed around Tank 2 and the associated improvements.

Well 1 Improvements:

- The existing Well 1 building would be demolished and replaced with a ~100-square-foot concrete masonry unit (CMU) building with a metal roof and door. The height of the building would be ~ten feet at the pitch of the roof.

The Well 1 building would house electrical controls, a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, a manual transfer switch, groundwater level monitoring equipment, and associated mechanical, piping, and valve appurtenances. Improvements would be made to allow connection of a portable generator in the event of an emergency.

The existing access road would be widened to 10 feet as feasible. Drainage from the site would be conveyed to rock-lined ditches adjacent to the retaining wall. The rock-lined ditch would extend from the southern end of the retaining wall downslope to the east. A stormdrain inlet would be installed near the northern end of the retaining wall; a stormdrain pipe would convey drainage to a rock-lined ditch near the bottom of the slope.

Due to current topography and the presence of fill on the site, approximately 2,000 square feet would be cleared and graded to accommodate the proposed improvements. The maximum depth of excavation for the Well 1 improvements is estimated at five feet.

Well 4 Improvements:

- The existing Well 4 building would be demolished and replaced with a ~125-square-foot CMU building with a metal roof and doors. The height of the building would be ~ten feet at the pitch of the roof.

The Well 4 building would house electrical controls, an HVAC system, a manual transfer switch, groundwater level monitoring equipment, associated piping and plumbing appurtenances, and a new SCADA control system, and associated mechanical, piping, and valve appurtenances. Improvements would be made to allow connection of a portable generator in the event of an emergency.

Surface Water Headworks and Sedimentation Basin Improvements

- Improvements to the existing diversion structure include installation of a new hatch and inlet screen. No earth disturbance would occur at the diversion structure site.
- The access road to the diversion structure is overgrown with berry bushes; the bushes will be trimmed back to allow access. No trees would be removed.
- The existing surface water pretreatment sedimentation basin would be demolished.

Pressure Reducing Valves/Meters

- Pressure reducing valves (PRVs) would be installed on ~47 lower elevation residential water services along Copco Road, Hornbrook Road, the area west of the railroad tracks, and the area along Rancheria Gulch to reduce the pressure to 80 psi or less in accordance with the California Plumbing Code.

The PRVs would be installed in a new meter box on the customer side of the meter. Some of the meters may need to be replaced as well. The maximum area of disturbance associated with installation of each meter box and PRV is four feet by six feet.

ATTACHMENT B
Documentation for Categorical Exemption
Hornbrook Community Services District
Water Treatment Improvements Project

As described in the Notice of Exemption (NOE), the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to §15301 (Class 1-Existing Facilities); §15302 (Class 2-Replacement or Reconstruction); and §15303 (Class 3-New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 identifies exceptions that override a lead agency's ability to use a categorical exemption. These exceptions are listed below, followed by documentation of why each exception does not apply to the proposed project.

1. Location. *Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located -- a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*

The proposed project is supported in part by a Class 3 exemption. As documented below, no evidence has been found to suggest that the project location is particularly sensitive. Likewise, the project is not expected to affect an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. Therefore, the Class 3 exemption is applicable to the proposed project.

2. Cumulative Impact. *All exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant.*

The project involves improvements to the Hornbrook Community Services District's (HCSD) water system. There are no other closely related reasonably foreseeable future projects in the project area that would cause related impacts. In addition, the project would not result in growth-inducing impacts. Therefore, the proposed project's impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

3. Significant Effect. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

An "unusual circumstance" exists if the project's circumstances differ from the general circumstances of projects covered by the applicable exemption, and, if so, whether there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment *due to* the unusual circumstances. As documented below, there are no unusual circumstances that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Aesthetics:

Proposed improvements that would result in a permanent visual change include the new Water Treatment Plant (WTP) building, generator, and propane tanks, and the two replacement water tanks. The remaining improvements would replace existing facilities or would be subsurface.

Although the WTP and Tank sites are visible to individuals living and working in the area and to travelers on adjacent roadways, including Interstate-5 (I-5), trees and intervening topography would substantially impede views of the improvements from I-5. Further, these improvements would not require the removal of trees and would not damage any scenic resources.

Temporarily disturbed areas would be restored as necessary. Temporary visual impacts during construction due to excavation and staging activities would cease upon the completion of the improvements; no unusual circumstances apply and no significant impacts would occur.

Agriculture and Forest Resources:

According to the *Important Farmland in California* map published by the FMMP, the WTP/Tank 1 Site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance and the Tank 2 Site, Well 1 Site, and Well 4 Site are designated as Grazing Land (DOC, 2020). In addition, according to the County's Zoning Map, these areas are currently zoned Non-Prime Agriculture (Siskiyou County, 2024). Although the project sites are designated for agricultural uses, the properties are currently developed with non-agricultural uses; the project includes replacement of existing structures, and no conversion of farmland would occur.

Some of the properties adjacent to the proposed improvements on the west side of I-5 are also designated as Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land (DOC, n.d.); however, the project does not include any features that would interfere with agricultural uses that may occur in the area.

Properties on the east side of I-5 are designated as Urban and Built-Up Land, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land (DOC, n.d.). Review of historic aerial imagery indicates that some areas in which PRV improvements would occur are adjacent to properties used as grazing land; however, PRV improvements would occur adjacent to existing water meters, and no direct or indirect impacts to farmland would occur.

Further, the proposed improvements would not require the removal of trees and would be in previously disturbed areas. Therefore, project implementation would not result in the loss of agricultural lands or forest resources.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions/Energy:

The proposed project would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀, and other regulated pollutants and GHGs during construction. ROG and NO_x emissions would be associated with employee vehicle trips, delivery of materials, and construction equipment exhaust. PM₁₀ would be generated during site preparation, excavation, road paving, and from exhaust associated with construction equipment. Due to the limited scope of the project and temporary nature of the work, impacts during construction would be minimal. Because the project primarily includes replacement of existing facilities, the increase in operational emissions would not be significant.

The improvements would not significantly increase energy use because the old electrical components would be replaced with newer, more efficient models. Emissions would be generated with the use of the propane generator; however, the generator would be used only in an emergency and for limited times during monthly testing. These improvements would not be considered a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

The project does not include any other components that would result in a long-term increase in emissions. There are no unusual circumstances associated with air quality, GHGs, or energy use that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Biological Resources:

As documented below, there are no unusual circumstances associated with special-status species, nesting birds, or other biological resources that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Special-Status Species:

The evaluation of potential impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats was based on a records search and field observations.

Records reviewed for the evaluation consisted of California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) records for special-status species and natural communities; California Native Plant Society (CNPS) records for special-status plants in the Hornbrook 7.5-minute quadrangle; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) records for federally listed, proposed, and candidate special-status species, and designated critical habitat for special-status species under jurisdiction of the USFWS; USFWS records for Birds of Conservation Concern; and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps. The CNDDDB records search covered an approximate five-mile radius around the study area.

Field evaluations were conducted by an ENPLAN biologist on May 19, 2023, and August 21, 2024. Special-status plants would have been identifiable during the botanical surveys. Some of the special-status wildlife species potentially occurring in the project area would not have been evident at the time the fieldwork was conducted; however, determination of their potential presence could readily be made based on observed habitat characteristics.

Special-Status Plants

Review of the USFWS species list for the project area identified one federally listed plant species, Yreka phlox (Federally Endangered [FE], California Rare Plant Rank [CRPR] 1B.2), as potentially being present in the project area. The project area does not contain designated critical habitat for federally listed plant species (USFWS, 2025).

Review of CNDDDB records showed that two special-status plant species have been broadly mapped in the project area: large-flowered triteleia (CRPR 2B.1) and Oregon polemonium (CRPR 2B.2). The following special-status plants have been reported within a five-mile radius of the project site: Greene's mariposa-lily (CRPR 1B.2), Peck's lomatium (CRPR 2B.2), Siskiyou mariposa-lily (CRPR 1B.2, State Rare [SR]), and subalpine aster (CRPR 2B.3) (CDFW, 2025). CNPS records identified the following additional special-status plant species within the USGS Hornbrook 7.5-minute quadrangle: Gentner's fritillary (CRPR 1B.1, FE) and Henderson's fawn lily (CRPR 2B.3). Mountain lady's-slipper (CRPR 4.2) was the only non-status plant recorded in the quadrangle (CNPS, 2025).

No special-status plant species were observed in the project sites during the field surveys and based on observed habitat characteristics, none are expected to be present.

Special-Status Wildlife

Review of the USFWS species list for the project area identified the following federally listed wildlife species as potentially being present in the project area: conservancy fairy shrimp (FE), Franklin's bumble bee (FE, State Candidate Endangered [SCE]), lost river sucker (FE), monarch butterfly (Federal Candidate [FC]), North American wolverine (Federally Threatened [FT]), northern spotted owl (FT), northwestern pond turtle (Federally Proposed Threatened [FPT]), shortnose sucker (FE), Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (Federally Proposed Endangered [FPE], SCE), vernal pool fairy shrimp (FT), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (FE), and yellow-billed cuckoo (FT). The USFWS also identifies California Condor (Experimental Population, Non-Essential [EXPN]) as potentially being present in the project area. The USFWS does not identify any designated critical habitat in the study area for any federally listed animal species (USFWS, 2025).

CNDDDB records showed that one special-status wildlife species, Townsend's big-eared bat (State Species of Special Concern [SSSC]), has been broadly mapped in the project area. The species was reported one time in 1925 in the vicinity of Hornbrook; however, the exact location is unknown.

The following special-status species were recorded within a five-mile radius of the project site: fisher (SSSC), foothill yellow-legged frog – North Coast DPS (SSSC), Klamath River lamprey (SSSC), lower Klamath marbled sculpin (SSSC), western bumble bee (SCE), and northwestern pond turtle (FPT, SSSC). CNDDDB identified three non-status species as occurring within a five-mile radius of the project sites: American peregrine falcon (Federally Delisted [FD], State Delisted [SD]), great blue heron, highcap lanx, montane peaclam, prairie falcon (Watch List [WL]), Siskiyou shoulderband, Tehama chaparral, western pearlshell, and western ridged mussel (CDFW, 2025).

Based on habitat observations, the following special-status species have the potential to be present in the general project area:

Franklin's bumble bee (*Bombus franklini*), Federally Endangered Species, State Candidate Endangered

Franklin's bumble bee has a very limited geographic distribution. The species may be found in Douglas, Josephine, and Jackson counties in Oregon, and in Siskiyou and Trinity counties in California. This species inhabits open grassy coastal prairies and Coast Range meadows from 540

feet to above 7800 feet in elevation. Important food plants include Lupinus, Agastache, Monardella, and Vicia.

While the project area is mapped to the habitat range known to be endemic to Franklin's bumble bee, the species itself has not been sighted since 2006, and since 1998 in California. Bumble Bee Watch (Xerces Society, 2025), and iNaturalist (iNaturalist, n.d.) indicate that no records of Franklin's bumble bee have been found within a five-mile-radius of the project area. CNNDDB records do show one record of Franklin's bumble bee within a five-mile radius of the project area, however, the species was mapped non-specifically to the project area. There is a lack of abundant floral resources present in or around the site, and thus Franklin's bumble bee is not expected to be present or adversely affected by project implementation.

Western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*), State Candidate Endangered

Western bumble bees are found in meadows and grasslands with abundant floral resources. In California, the species is largely confined to high-elevation sites in the Sierra Nevada and scattered sites on the coast. The flight period is generally from early February to late November. Nests are primarily in underground cavities on open west-southwest slopes bordered by trees, although a few aboveground nests have been reported. Very little is known about overwintering sites; however, the species has been reported in overwintering sites that were two inches deep in a "steep west slope of the mound of earth."

While the project area is within the western bumble bee's historic range, it is not within the species active habitat range (CDFW, 2023). Bumble Bee Watch (Xerces Society, 2025), and iNaturalist (iNaturalist, n.d.) indicate that no records of the western bumble bee have been found within a five-mile-radius of the project area. CNNDDB records do show one record of the western bumble bee within a five-mile radius of the project area, however, the record was collected in 1967, and the exact location was unknown. Additionally, there is a lack of floral resources on-site, and the species is not anticipated to forage within the project area. Therefore, it is unlikely that the western bumble bee will be present on the project site, or adversely affected by project implementation.

Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee (*Bombus suckleyi*) Federally Proposed Endangered, State Candidate Endangered

In California, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bees are limited to the Klamath Mountains. The bee is a social parasite that has only been documented to reproduce successfully in colonies of western bumble bees. Females emerge in late May, forage primarily on species of composites, and search for a suitable host bumble bee nest. Very little is known about overwintering sites utilized by the species, although generally, bumble bee females overwinter in soft, disturbed soil or under leaf litter or other debris. As documented above, western bumble bee does not have the potential to be present in the project sites; therefore, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee likewise is not expected to be present.

As documented above, based on observed habitat characteristics and the fact that improvements would occur in previously disturbed areas, no adverse effects on special-status species are expected.

Natural Communities

CNNDDB records did not identify any natural communities in the project area (CDFW, 2025). The USFWS NWI showed that no wetlands are mapped in the project sites (USFWS, n.d.). No wetlands or other potentially jurisdictional waters were observed in the project sites during the field surveys.

Nesting Migratory Birds

The USFWS identified the following Birds of Conservation Concern as potentially being present in the project area: California gull, chestnut-backed chickadee, Clark's Grebe, evening grosbeak, oak titmouse, rufous hummingbird, Western Grebe, and wren-tit. The bald eagle and golden eagle are not listed as Birds of Conservation Concern, but the USFWS noted that they are birds that warrant attention because they are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (USFWS, 2025). Construction activities are not

expected to directly affect nesting migratory birds because nearly all work would be completed in previously disturbed areas and no trees would be removed. The potential for adversely affecting nesting birds at the Well 1 site and water intake structure will be minimized by conducting construction activities outside of the nesting season (between September 1 and January 31), or conducting pre-construction nesting surveys in accordance with existing standard construction measures if work is conducted during the nesting season. There are no unusual circumstances associated with special-status species, natural communities, wetlands, nesting birds, or other biological resources that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Geology and Soils:

According to the Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones Map, the nearest Alquist Priolo Study Zone is the Cedar Mountain Fault Zone, ~25 miles east of the project site (California Department of Conservation [DOC], n.d.a.). The nearest potentially active faults are ~20 miles east of the study area (DOC, n.d.b.).

Soils within the project area are mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Atter very gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes; Hilt stony sandy loam, 2 to 50 percent slopes; and Hilt-Rock outcrop complex, 2 to 50 percent slopes (USDA, n.d.). These soil types are found throughout the Hornbrook area and are not unique to the project site. There are no unusual circumstances related to geology and soils in the project site.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction activities would result in the temporary disturbance of soil and would expose disturbed areas to potential storm events, which could generate accelerated runoff, localized erosion, and sedimentation. However, this is a temporary impact during construction activities, and no long-term impacts would occur. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion/sediment control would be implemented during earth-disturbing activities in accordance with standard construction practices, which would minimize potential impacts to surface and groundwater quality.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel 06093C3025D, effective January 18, 2011), the proposed improvements on District property are not located within a designated flood hazard zone. Some of the PRV sites are located within a designated 100-year Flood Hazard Zone (Zone A – no base flood elevations determined) (FEMA, n.d.). These improvements include installing PRVs on existing water services within new subsurface meter boxes. In the long term, there would be no risk of the release of pollutants due to inundation by a flood. Therefore, the project would not impede or redirect flood flows or otherwise adversely affect the natural value and functions of the floodplain.

Land Use and Planning:

The proposed project would not conflict with the applicable goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the County's General Plan and associated land use plans. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community or cause an environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation.

Mineral Resources:

There are no designated Mineral Resource Zones in the project area (DOC, 2016). In addition, there are no properties in the project area that are zoned or used for mining activities.

Noise:

Construction activities would generate noise and would temporarily increase noise levels in the project area; however, this is a temporary impact that would cease upon completion of the project. The project includes the installation of an emergency generator adjacent to the new WTP building. However, the generator would be used only in the event of an emergency and for limited times during monthly testing. The project does not include any components that would increase noise levels above existing levels in the long term.

Therefore, an increase in ambient noise due to use of the generator would be less than significant. There are no unusual circumstances associated with noise that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Population and Housing:

The purpose of the proposed project is to replace damaged and aging infrastructure, improve fire flows, and ensure a safe and reliable water source for existing customers in the HCSD. Although the project would increase water storage capacity, the increase is required to meet current standards for public water systems rather than to accommodate future growth. Therefore, the project would not induce population growth in the area. There are no unusual circumstances associated with population or housing that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Public Services/Recreation:

Because the project would not induce population growth in the area, the project would not generate a demand for additional fire protection, police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, or other public services.

Transportation/Traffic:

Because the project would not induce population growth, the project would not directly or indirectly result in a permanent increase in traffic or vehicle miles traveled. There would be short-term increases in traffic in the area associated with construction workers; however, this is a temporary impact and would cease upon completion of the project.

Utilities and Service Systems:

The project would not require the relocation of sewer lines, electric facilities, storm drains, natural gas, or other utility infrastructure. Because the project would not induce population growth, no increased demand for water supply, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal services would occur. There are no unusual circumstances associated with utilities or service systems that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed project.

Wildfire:

The WTP and Tank 1 Site, Tank 2 Site, and both the Well 1 and Well 4 Sites are located in a Very High FHSZ in a State Responsibility Area (CAL FIRE, 2024); therefore, the new structures are subject to California Fire Code (CFC) and California Building Code (CBC) requirements to minimize damage or loss of buildings due to wildland fires. In addition, the CFC includes requirements that must be followed during construction, including Chapter 33 (Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition) and Chapter 35 (Welding and Other Hot Work). These regulations prescribe safeguards for construction, alteration, and demolition operations intended to maintain required levels of fire protection, limit fire spread, establish the appropriate operation of equipment, and promote prompt response to fire emergencies. Specific safeguards are included for welding, cutting, open torches, and other hot work operations to prevent sparks or heat from igniting exposed combustibles.

Implementation of existing CFC and CBC regulations minimizes potential risks to people and structures involving wildland fires. In the long term, the project would have a beneficial effect by increasing the District's fire storage and improving fire flows, thereby increasing fire suppression capabilities.

There are no unique circumstances associated with the proposed project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar projects in the area.

4. Scenic Highways. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a State Scenic Highway.*

According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the project area (Caltrans, n.d.). Therefore, there would be no impact.

5. Hazardous Waste Sites. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code.*

The following databases were reviewed to locate "Cortese List" sites.

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database.
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker Database.
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
- List of active Cease and Desist Orders and Clean-Up and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB.

The records search revealed that the project is not located on a hazardous waste site. Additionally, there are no active clean-up sites or hazardous waste sites within a one-mile radius of the study area (California Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.).

6. Historical Resources. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

A cultural resources study was completed for the proposed project by ENPLAN. The study included a records search, Native American consultation, and field evaluation. The records search was conducted by the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NEIC/CHRIS) on September 19, 2022, and covered a 1/4-mile radius around the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE includes all areas in which improvements would occur, and areas for staging and temporary construction access, as well as sufficient area for construction.

The records search revealed that three archaeological surveys have been conducted within a 1/4-mile radius of the APE. Additional research by ENPLAN identified one additional cultural resource study from Caltrans District 2. None of the studies encompass the project APE. The record search revealed that there are eight previously recorded sites in the search radius, one of which is within the project's APE.

On November 1, 2022, the NAHC conducted a search of the Sacred Lands File; the search did not reveal any known Native American sacred sites or cultural resources in the project area. The NAHC also provided contact information for several Native American representatives and organizations, who were contacted on November 2, 2022, with a request to provide comments on the proposed project. One response was received from Ken Sandusky with the Modoc Nation on May 26, 2023, stating that the Modoc Nation has no concerns with the proposed project. No other responses were received.

Archaeological fieldwork took place on October 6, 2022, during which the APE was intensively surveyed to identify cultural resources that would be potentially affected by the proposed project. An additional field survey that covered the PRV locations was completed on July 17, 2024. No cultural resources were found within the APE.

The CRI does note that one of the water meters is located adjacent to a concrete pad attached to Menotti's Market (15508 Hornbrook Road). The building dates to circa 1911; however, the date of the patio is unknown. Due to the nature of the work, installation of the PRV and meter box would not result in modifications to the building or other structural components associated with the building. If the project is modified in a manner that could result in impacts to the building, an evaluation of the building may be required.

The CRI concluded that the project would have no effect on historical or prehistoric resources. However, because there is always some potential for previously unknown cultural resources to be encountered during site excavation, the following standard construction measures would be included in construction contracts for the project to address the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains:

1. In the event of any inadvertent discovery of cultural resources (i.e., burnt animal bone, midden soils, projectile points or other humanly modified lithics, historic artifacts, etc.), all work within 50 feet of the find shall be halted until a professional archaeologist can evaluate the significance of the find in accordance with PRC §21083.2(g) and §21084.1, and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a). If any find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist, the District shall meet with the archaeologist to determine the appropriate course of action. If necessary, a Treatment Plan prepared by an archeologist outlining recovery of the resource, analysis, and reporting of the find shall be prepared. The Treatment Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the District prior to resuming construction.
2. In the event that human remains are encountered during construction activities, the District shall comply with §15064.5 (e) (1) of the CEQA Guidelines and PRC §7050.5. All project-related ground disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains shall cease until the County coroner has been notified. If the coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to identify the most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans. Project-related ground disturbance in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the process detailed in §15064.5 (e) of the CEQA Guidelines has been completed.
3. In the event that project plans change to include areas not surveyed, additional archaeological reconnaissance may be required. If cultural resources are encountered, the archaeologist shall recommend/implement additional mitigation measures as necessary, which may include subsequent monitoring by an archaeologist or Native American representative.

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