

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**To:**  
Tulare County Clerk  
221 S. Mooney Blvd, Rm 105  
Visalia, CA 93291

**From:**  
Tri-County Water Authority  
944 Whitley Ave., Suite E  
Corcoran, CA 93212

Kings County Clerk/Recorder  
Kings County Government Center  
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.  
Hanford, CA 93230

Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044  
Online Submittal via CEQA Submit

**Project Title:** Subsidence Management Plan (Tule Subbasin - Southeast Management Area) (Project)

**Project Location:** Tule Subbasin – Kings and Tulare County

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project (Lead Agency):** Tri-County Water Authority

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Tri-County Water Authority

**Project Description:** The Project is the adoption of a Subsidence Management Plan for the Tule Subbasin – Southeast Management Area. Tri-County Water Authority (“TCWA”) Groundwater Sustainability Agency adopted groundwater sustainability plans (“GSPs”) for the Tule Subbasin on December 18, 2019, and for the Tulare Lake Subbasin on January 22, 2020, consistent with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (Water Code §10720 et seq.) (“SGMA”). The Tule and Tulare Lake Subbasins (collectively, “Subbasins”) are located within the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin.

The GSPs recognize that the Subbasins are in a state of overdraft and undesirable results, including land subsidence, must be addressed pursuant to SGMA. In approving the Project, the TWCA Board of Directors (“Board”) exercised its flexible management authority in the Tule Subbasin GSP to ensure that undesirable results of the Tule Subbasin, including subsidence, are addressed within SGMA’s sustainability timeframe. The Project has been prepared to address across the Southeast Management Area. The Project’s purpose is to establish enforceable management actions to address subsidence and avoid exceeding the Tule Subbasin GSP’s established minimum thresholds related to land subsidence in the Southeast Management Area.

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**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
  - Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
  - Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
  - Categorical Exemptions: Class 7, Guidelines § 15307 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources; and Class 8, Guidelines § 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment
  - Common Sense Exemption, Guidelines § 15061(b)(3)
  - Statutory Exemption
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**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:**

TCWA reviewed the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15307 categorical exemption (Class 7 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources) applies to actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 categorical exemption (Class 8 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment) applies to actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) provides that 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 activity is exempt from CEQA.

TCWA reviewed the Project and determined that it is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3), 15307 and 15308. TWCA’s Board exercised its flexible management authority to ensure that all undesirable results of the Tule Subbasin, including subsidence, are addressed within SGMA’s 20-year sustainability timeframe. The Project has been prepared to address subsidence across the Southeast Management Area. The Project’s purpose is to establish enforceable management actions to address subsidence and avoid exceeding the Tule Subbasin GSP’s established minimum thresholds related to land subsidence in the Southeast Management Area.

TCWA reviewed the Project and determined that none of the exceptions to categorical exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 were applicable.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:**

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Staci Wilkins  
Board Secretary  
Tri-County Water Authority



Date