

# 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: Madera  
200 W. 4th Street

Madera, CA 93637

From: (Public Agency): City of Chowchilla  
130 S. Second Street  
Chowchilla, CA 93610

(Address)

Project Title: Golden Valley Pistachio Process Waste Water Discharge

Project Applicant: Golden Valley Pistachio Co. LLC.

Project Location - Specific:

16333 Avenue 24 1/2, Chowchilla, CA 93610 and APN 002-350-017

Project Location - City: Chowchilla

Project Location - County: Madera

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:  
see attached.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Chowchilla

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Golden Valley Pistachio Co. LLC.

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: Sec 15061(b)(3) - Sec 15304, Class 4
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why project is exempt:  
see attached

Lead Agency  
Contact Person: Jaime Quintana Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 665-8615

**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: [Signature] Date: 05/08/2025 Title: Director

of Community & Ec

Signed by Lead Agency  Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Project Description**

The facility is a nut processing facility that currently operates under Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) issued by the Central Valley Water Board related to the discharge of treated wastewater. The operator intends to use an additional 14.78-acre parcel (APN 002-350-017) across the street from their facility. This parcel is currently under almond cultivation.

The facility utilizes highly efficient dry peelers during the hulling process, significantly reducing water usage by eliminating the need for water in the initial hull removal stage. Following hulling, residual hulls adhering to the pistachios are removed using Loose Hull Remover (LHR) machines that employ water to rinse and separate remaining materials. The pistachios are then conveyed through a float tank for separation of blank nuts and receive a final rinse prior to drying.

The rinse water generated during these operations is routed through a pressure screen filtration system followed by a vertical mesh sieve, which removes organic debris and suspended solids. The filtered process water is collected in a storage tank and transported by truck for off-site application. The facility intends to irrigate 14.58 acres of almonds with the process water. Water will be applied using a mounted spray system.

The process water does not contain hazardous or industrial chemicals. It originates solely from food-grade rinsing operations and contains beneficial nutrients such as potassium, which support almond tree health and productivity. This practice promotes sustainable agriculture by conserving freshwater resources, recycling rinse water, and enhancing soil fertility. The quality of the discharge water is periodically monitored through a certified laboratory to verify its suitability for agricultural irrigation and to ensure environmentally responsible reuse. Any future expansions of the facility in regard to building square footage or land used for production purposes may require an additional land use permit.

Reason why the project is exempt:

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines section 15061 (b)(3). Section 15061 (b)(3) states that "CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. 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 not subject to CEQA." There is no possibility that this project may have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, the project is not subject to CEQA. Reason why the project is exempt:

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This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) applies to minor public or private alterations of the condition of land, water, or vegetation that do not include the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The exemption includes grading on land with a slope of less than 10% or new gardening or landscaping.