

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<p>To: Office of Planning & Research 1400 Tenth Street Sacramento, CA 95814</p> <p>To: Kern County Clerk 1115 Truxtun Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93301</p> <p>To: Fresno County Clerk Attn: Clerk Services 2221 Kern Street Fresno, CA 93721</p>	<p>Lead Agency/Applicant</p> <p>From: Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa WSD 12109 Highway 166 Bakersfield, CA 93313-9630 661-527-6069</p>
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Project Title: Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District ("WRM") and Semitropic Water Storage District ("SWSD") are proposing to transfer, on behalf of Common Landowner Maricopa Orchards LLC ("MOC"), up to 30,000 AF of 2019 Central Valley Project water from Westlands Water District ("WWD").

Location -- Specific: WWD is located in Fresno County; WRM and SWSD are each located in Kern County. WRM has lands in the Delta Export Service Area of the CVP. Additionally, CVP Supplies acquired by the common landowner to both Districts are eligible to be delivered to WRM and SWSD under its Final Environmental Assessment FONSI EA-17-006 dated June 2017.

Location -- Counties: Fresno County and Kern County.

Description of Activity: WWD will make available up to 30,000 acre-feet of its 2019 CVP water for delivery to WRM and SWSD and/or their designated banking facilities, all within Kern County, California. This transfer will occur on behalf of a common landowner to both Districts. WWD forecasts that it will have up to 30,000 acre-feet of such 2019 CVP water supply captured at O'Neill Forebay in San Luis Reservoir by February 28, 2020 and that it is willing to transfer said supply to WRM and SWSD from O'Neill Forebay during the 2019/2020 Water Year.

Name of Public Agencies Approving or Carrying Out Activity: Westlands Water District, Wheeler Ridge – Maricopa WSD (Lead Agency), Semitropic Water Storage District, California Department of Water Resources and Kern County Water Agency (Responsible Agencies), Fresno County and Kern County.

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial
- Declared Emergency
- Emergency Project
- Categorical Exemption.** State type and section number: See CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.
- Statutory Exemption.** State code number: See CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)3.

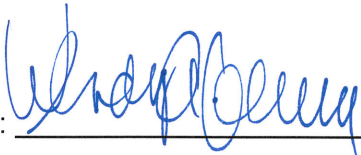
Reasons why activity is exempt: CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)3 provides that a Lead Agency may determine an activity to be exempt from CEQA based upon the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have a potential for causing significant environmental impacts. Where it can be seen with 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. Wheeler Ridge finds that approval of the proposed water transfer has no possibility for significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

1. The proposed action consists of a one-time water transfer that will use existing facilities and would not require any construction or grading.
2. The project does not constitute a new permanent source of water supply and will not result in any growth inducing or cumulative environmental impacts.
3. There will be no land use changes or additional agricultural acreage being cultivated as a result of the proposed project.

Additionally, since the project will rely on the operation of existing facilities, there will be no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the Lead Agency's determination and will not have a significant effect on the physical environment; the project also qualifies for a categorical exemption from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

None of the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines would apply to the proposed action.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Wendy A. Jones
Water Resources Manager
(661) 527-6069

Signature:  Title: WATER RESOURCES MGR Date: 03. JULY 2019

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing by County Clerk:

Governor's Office of Planning & Research
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