

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Project Title: Proposed One-time Increase of State Water Project Water Delivery from Pyramid Lake to United Water Conservation District

Project Location: The Project begins at Pyramid Lake and Pyramid Dam, which are component facilities of the State Water Project (SWP). Pyramid Lake is a reservoir formed by Pyramid Dam, located in Los Angeles County, California. Approximately 13 miles northwest of Castaic. Specifically, SW 1/4 of Section 2, Township 6N, Range 18W.

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources

Project Applicant: California Department of Water Resources

Description of Activity:

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has requested authorization from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to grant a variance from Article 52 of the existing FERC license for the South SWP Hydropower Project, FERC Project Number 2426. Article 52 of the existing FERC license provides for the simulation of the natural hydrograph of the Piru Creek watershed through releases into Piru Creek below Pyramid Lake and Pyramid Dam. Under the existing license, water deliveries are made to the United Water Conservation District (United) through Pyramid Dam into Piru Creek and thence into Lake Piru by mimicking a natural storm event. Article 52 in the existing license further provides for water deliveries to United up to 3,150 acre-feet (AF) between November 1 and the end of February through Pyramid Dam into Piru Creek and thence into Lake Piru by mimicking a natural storm event. The Article 52 variance would allow for a one-time delivery total of 8,987 acre-feet (AF) SWP water from Pyramid Dam to United that would be released to mimic a natural storm event. The water release to Piru Creek from the Pyramid Reach will occur before the end of February 2020. The release schedule will be designed to mimic a natural hydrograph, including a gradual ramp up and ramp down of flows, and a peak flow similar to a typical storm event for this period. The final schedule for the release will be established with consideration of operational constraints at Pyramid Dam, natural hydrology and the timing of the issuance of the variance by FERC. The duration of the release could be as little as five days and as much as 3 weeks.

To support the Article 52 variance, DWR has requested authorization from the State Water Resources Control Board for a temporary amendment to Condition No. 1 in the Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification that was previously issued for

the South SWP Hydropower Project to accommodate the increased SWP water delivery to United. The proposed increase of SWP water delivery is intended for the beneficial use of addressing critically depleted groundwater conditions within United's service boundary. The release will be completed by February 29, 2020.

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 Exemption. State type and section number: § 15301
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Water Resources

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Water Resources

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: Based on an examination of the proposed project, this project qualifies for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption § 15301 – Existing Facilities under the California Environmental Quality Act for the following reasons:

- a. The project is a water management operation using only existing facilities.
- b. The project will not support new development or a change in land use.
- c. The project does not establish a new permanent source of water supply.
- d. The project is not expected to have any effects on the environment.
- e. There will be no expansion of existing use of any facility.
- f. None of the exceptions in § 15300.2 apply (e.g., no cumulative impact, no significant effect or impact to areas of critical concern.) In addition, there is no impact to any state- or federally-listed species or to any cultural resource.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Gwen Knittweis, Chief
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Gwen Knittweis
California Department of Water Resources

12/24/19

Date

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE