

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: Office of Planning and Research P.O. Box 3044, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044	From: California Department of Water Resources 1416 9th Street Sacramento, CA 95814
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Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Project Title: Delta-Mendota Groundwater Monitoring Well Installation Project

Project Location City & County: City of Dos Palos and Mendota in Fresno County (County), California.

Project Location – Specific: The Project will occur in Fresno County. The location for Well 1 will be approximately 13 miles southwest of Dos Palos, west of the California Aqueduct, east of Interstate 5, and on the south side of Little Panoche Creek. Well 2 will be located approximately 3 miles east of Mendota, 2 miles north of Whitesbridge Road (CA-180), and west of San Mateo Avenue.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law requiring local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage groundwater in their service area that necessitates the development of an adequate network of appropriately spaced groundwater monitoring wells. With secured funding, DWR has established the Technical Support Services (TSS) program to help GSAs meet their SGMA requirements by providing services to install groundwater monitoring wells, conduct downhole video logging, and training on methods to accurately monitor groundwater levels.

The Delta-Mendota Well Installation project consists of installing two nested groundwater monitoring wells at two locations. Both well sites will be marked by Underground Service Alert, then hand tools will be used to excavate to a minimum depth of 5 feet. A driller will use a truck-mounted drill rig to drill a pilot hole while using a mud cleaner to filter out solids and return drilling mud to the drill bit. The pilot hole desired depths are 600 feet below ground surface for Well 1 and 1,000 feet below ground surface for Well 2. Based on logging results, the driller will expand the borehole to selected depths to a diameter large enough to accommodate nested well casings (approximately 14 inches). Within each borehole, three PVC casings, sand, and a bentonite seal will be constructed. For a final sanitary seal, neat cement will be pumped from the support truck to fill the annular space between the casings and the borehole wall to a depth required by the local well permitting process. A raised steel well protective cover and concrete pad, approximately four by four feet in area and four inches tall with four approximately 3-foot high metal crash posts will be installed at ground level to protect the well from potential damage.

Well development will occur a minimum 72 hours after completion of the sanitary seal. Well development is done to remove any fine-grained materials from the well. After completion of each monitoring well, battery powered pressure transducers and data loggers will be installed to measure continuous groundwater levels.

DWR anticipates well installation at each well site to take approximately 3 weeks to complete. Construction equipment would include pickup trucks, forklift, drill rig, mud cleaner, and generator.

DWR or GSA staff may visit the wells on a quarterly schedule to collect data. Operation and maintenance will be minimal and may consist of periodic servicing of equipment and replacing batteries as needed. Access to both well locations will be by existing dirt and paved roads.

Once installed, these facilities would become part of the GSA's monitoring program.

Exempt/Suspend Status:

- Ministerial (§21080[b][1]; 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Proclamation of a State of Emergency Due to Drought)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080[b][4]; California Code of Regulations §15269[c])
- Categorical Exemption: 15306. Information Collection.
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: Work activities will consist of installation of two groundwater monitoring wells. Project activities are covered under Categorical Exemption Class 6 Section 15306 (Data Collection) of the California Environmental Quality Act. No sensitive biological or cultural resources have been identified in the area.

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

Contact Person: Steven Springhorn

Telephone: (916) 651-9273

Signature: Steven Springhorn **Date:** 3/4/2020 **Title:** Supervising Eng. Geologist

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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