

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: _____

From: (Public Agency): California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95818

(Address)

Project Title: CDFW Solar Energy Pilot Project

Project Applicant: N/A

Project Location - Specific:

Darrah Springs Fish Hatchery, Yolo Bypass WA, Mendota WA, Los Banos WA, Gray Lodge WA

Project Location - City: Paynes Creek, Davis, Mendota, Los Banos, Gridley Project Location - County: Shasta, Yolo, Fresno, Merced, Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This pilot project involves CDFW execution of various agreements to install small photo-voltaic solar energy equipment to generate electrical power at five CDFW properties, including Darrah Springs Hatchery, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Los Banos Wildlife Area, Mendota Wildlife Area, Yolo Wildlife Area.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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: 14 CCR 15303, 15311
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

See attachment.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: James Robbins Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 916-653-7667

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: James Robbins Date: 3/18/2022 Title: Deputy Director Administration

DocuSigned by:

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▪ 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: _____



ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

CDFW Solar Energy Pilot Project

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), through its Administrative Division, has approved a pilot project for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)(Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) that includes the installation and operation of small-scale, photo-voltaic solar arrays that will generate and provide electricity at five CDFW properties in California (collectively, the Project). All arrays will be mounted to the ground, except at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, with sizes of the arrays as follows: Darrah Springs Fish Hatchery, 59,500 square feet/1.365 acres; Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, 35,000 square feet/0.803 acres; Los Banos Wildlife Area, 27,500 square feet/0.631 acres; Mendota Wildlife Area, 28,000 square feet/0.642 acres. The array at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is a canopy system and is therefore not measured in acreage or square footage. The Project solar arrays are being sited at each CDFW property to avoid and minimize the prospect of adverse environmental effects, and to maximize the continued biological value and function at each property. CDFW approved the Project executing power purchase and site license agreements for each property, relying on the Class 3 and 11 Categorical Exemptions, respectively. (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15303, 15311.)¹ Each exemption as relevant to the Project is discussed below.

Class 3 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds the Project to be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303, the exemption for “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.” Class 3, as relevant here, consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures and installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures. The Project falls within the class because it involves the installation of a limited number of new solar arrays at five CDFW properties. The footprint of the new solar arrays is small, ranging from 0.631 acres to 1.3 acres. The new solar arrays are accessory to already existing CDFW facilities and will supplement and replace existing power utilities at the properties.

Class 11 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds the Project to be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15311, the “Accessory Structures” exemption. Class 11, as relevant here, consists of construction of minor structures accessory (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities. The Project falls within the class because the solar arrays are minor structures accessory to already existing CDFW facilities, including shops, parking lots, and staff residences.

¹ The “CEQA Guidelines” are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.