

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
Post Office Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, California 95812-3044

From: Central Coast Water Authority
255 Industrial Way
Buellton, CA 93427

Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Barbara
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Project Title: Temporary Warren Act Contract No. 22-WC-20-5954 between Central Coast Water Authority and United States Bureau of Reclamation

Location – Specific: United States Bureau of Reclamation's ("Reclamation") existing Cachuma Project facilities (i.e., Bradbury Dam and Lake Cachuma, Tecolote Tunnel, and the South Coast Conduit), the Lower Santa Ynez River below Bradbury Dam, and the service areas of Central Coast Water Authority's South Coast Participants (Carpinteria Valley Water District, the City of Santa Barbara, Goleta Water District, Montecito Water District, La Cumbre Mutual Water Company, La Cumbre Mutual Water Company, Morehart Land Co., and Raytheon Systems Co.).

Location – County: Santa Barbara County

Description of Activity: Approval of a short-term Warren Act Contract between Central Coast Water Authority ("CCWA") and Reclamation, Contract No. 22-WC-20-5954 (the "Temporary Warren Act Contract"). The Temporary Warren Act Contract is necessary to continue the annual introduction, storage, and conveyance of up to 13,750 acre-feet of water acquired by or available to CCWA from or through the State Water Project ("SWP") into Cachuma Project facilities for delivery to CCWA's South Coast Participants beyond June 2022, when CCWA's existing 25-year Warren Act Contract (Contract No. 5-07-20-W1282) expires. The term of the Temporary Warren Act Contract will extend through September 30, 2024.

Name of Public Agency Approving or Carrying Out Activity: Central Coast Water Authority

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Ministerial
- ☐ Declared Emergency
- ☐ Emergency Project
- ☒ Categorical Exemption
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (Not a Project Under CEQA)

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CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Reasons why activity is exempt:

CEQA Guidelines section 15301 (14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15301 [Class 1 exemption]) sets forth an exemption from CEQA for the operation and permitting of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. CEQA Guidelines section 15304 (14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15304 [Class 4 exemption]) further provides an exemption for "minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes." The Temporary Warren Act Contract is exempt because it will continue to allow the annual introduction, storage, and conveyance of up to 13,750 acre-feet of water acquired by or available to CCWA from or through the SWP into Cachuma Project facilities for delivery to the CCWA South Coast Participants and will therefore not expand the use of Cachuma Project facilities beyond that now permitted by CCWA's existing 25-year Warren Act Contract.

None of the exceptions to use of an exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 apply and the Temporary Warren Act Contract will not have a significant impact on the environment where it will continue to allow the annual introduction, storage, and conveyance of the same quantity of water available to CCWA from or through the SWP into Cachuma Project facilities as has been authorized for the last 25 years. Under the Temporary Warren Act Contract, CCWA water would continue to be introduced and conveyed through Cachuma Project facilities (i.e., Bradbury Dam outlet works, Stilling Basin, Lake Cachuma, North Intake of the Tecolote Tunnel, and the South Coast Conduit) to the CCWA Participants located along the South Coast Conduit. No modifications to existing infrastructure or construction would occur.

Through the Temporary Warren Act Contract, measures to avoid and minimize effects to listed species, including the Southern California Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Distinct Population Segment will be implemented. Reclamation issued an Environmental Assessment ("EA") pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the Temporary Warren Act Contract on March 25, 2022, and the public comment period closed on April 22, 2022. Reclamation's approval of the Temporary Warren Act Contract is contingent on its issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact ("FONSI") concluding that issuance of the Temporary Warren Act Contract would not have a significant impact on the environment. Reclamation has indicated that it will issue its FONSI after obtaining concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service that issuance of the Temporary Warren Act Contract would have either no effect on species listed under the Endangered Species Act, or would be not likely to adversely affect such species or their critical habitat.

As more fully described in Reclamation's EA, over the last 25 years, CCWA has monitored and studied its operations under its existing long-term 25-year Warren Act Contract, including water quality and temperature. Through its monitoring, CCWA has not identified any information suggesting that there is a reasonable possibility that the continued conveyance of 13,750 acre-feet of water pursuant to the Temporary Warren Act Contract will have a significant effect on the environment.

Agency Contact Person: Ray Stokes

Telephone: (805) 688-2292

Signature:

Ray Stokes

Date:

6-9-22

Title: Executive Director, Central Coast Water Authority

Date received for filing OPR: _____