Notice of Exemption **2019018243** Appendix E

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

X County Clerk
County of Kern
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

X County Clerk
County of Fresno
2121 Kern Street
Fresno, CA 93721

X County Clerk
County of Kings
1400 W. Lacey
Hanford, CA 93230

X County Clerk
County of Madera
200 W. 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

X County Clerk
County of Tulare
221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 103
Visalia, CA 93291

Lead Agency:
Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District (Public Agency)
12109 Highway 166, Bakersfield, CA 93312
(Address)

Project Title: Westside Mutual Water Company LLC's (WMWC) Multiyear Banking and Transfer Program (Project)

Project Location – County: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The purpose of the Project is to maximize available water supplies due to fluctuating hydrological years in order to have a reliable water supply to sustain existing agricultural operations. The Project would allow banking or direct delivery for irrigation of available water supplies. For example supplies could be acquired during wet years, such as 2017, for use during dry years. The Project would provide WMWC with operational flexibility and facilitate better management of available supplies to meet existing water supply needs. The source of supplies, recipient water districts and lands for direct deliveries, and water banks where water would be stored, and other aspects of the Project, are described in Exhibit A attached to this Notice of Exemption. Beneficiaries of the project are landowners and water users within the boundaries of recipient water districts described in Exhibit A. Much of the land that will be benefitted by the Project is within Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District (District). The Project would utilize existing facilities and not involve any construction, and Project water would be used to irrigate existing farmlands and would not result in any land conversions.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Lead Agency: Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District.

2019018243

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Lead Agency: Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District. Applicant: Westside Mutual Water Company, LLC.

Exempt Status:

X Categorical Exemption. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301.
X Statutory Exemptions. Water Code, Section 1729.
X The "common sense" exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3).

Reasons why project is exempt:

The Lead Agency has determined that the Project is exempt from further compliance with CEQA for the following reasons:

The District has determined that the Project is exempt under CEQA. This determination is based upon the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have a potential for causing significant environmental impacts, and that where (as here) 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. Furthermore, the District has determined the Project has no possibility for significant effect on the environment because, (i) the Project will use existing facilities and would not require any construction or grading, (ii) the Project does not create, require or constitute a new permanent source of water supply, and will not result in any growth inducing or cumulative environmental impacts, (iii) there will be no land use changes as a result of the Project, and (iv) no new lands will be brought into production as a consequence of Project banking or water deliveries. Additionally, the District has determined that the Project will utilize the operation of existing facilities, and there will be no expansion of use beyond that existing as of the date of this Agreement. Therefore, the Class 1 existing facilities exemption (CEQA Guidelines section 15301), and the common sense exemption apply (CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3)). Moreover, water transfers occurring for a period of one year or less are statutorily exempt from CEQA (Water Code section 1729).

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Sheridan Nicholas, General Manager
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (661) 858-2281

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: _____ Date: 1/11/19 Title: General Manager

× Signed by Lead Agency

☐ Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR:

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JAN 15 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

EXHIBIT A

20190182 43

Multiyear Banking and Transfer Program for Westside Mutual Water Company

Project Description

The landowners served by the Westside Mutual Water Company (WMWC) farm lands in various water districts located within the Central Valley Project (CVP) place of use (see Table 1 below) and three districts outside the CVP place of use (see Table 2 below) (collectively, Districts). The largest percentage of said Districts and lands served by WMWC are located in Kern County. In addition, WMWC is a participant in the Kern Water Bank and WMWC members, through land ownership in participating Districts have access to the Pioneer Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project, and the Berrenda Mesa Property Joint Water Banking Project (collectively, the Banking Projects), which Banking Projects are located in Kern County. The CEQA lead agency, Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District (WRMWSD), is one of the Kern County Districts where a large portion of said landowners are served by WMWC, and WRMWSD is also a participant in each of said Banking Projects.

Table 1. Districts within CVP place of use with WMWC landholdings.

Friant Division CVP Contractors	
Arvin-Edison Water Storage District	
Exeter Irrigation District	Kern Tulare Water District
Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District	Madera Irrigation District
Orange Cove Irrigation District	Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District
Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District	Stone Corral Irrigation District
San Luis Unit (West San Joaquin Division) CVP Contractors	
Westlands Water District	
San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors	
Columbia Canal Company	Firebaugh Canal Water District
State Water Project Contractors	
Dudley Ridge Water District	
Kern County Water Agency member units	
Cawelo Water District	Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District
Semitropic Water Storage District	Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District
Other	
Aliso Water District	Alta Irrigation District
Corcoran Irrigation District	Ducor Irrigation District
North Kern Water Storage District	Root Creek Water District

Table 2. Districts with WMWC landholdings outside of the CVP place of use.

State Water Project Contractors	
Kern County Water Agency member units	
Belridge Water Storage District	Berrenda Mesa Water District
Lost Hills Water District	

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) annually approves transfers and/or exchanges of CVP water supplies from Friant Division CVP Contractors, South-of-Delta CVP contractors and other CVP contractors to lands within the CVP place of use and to lands outside of the CVP

place of use under temporary orders of the California State Water Resources Control Board. In order to better manage available and future water supplies, WMWC hereby requests a 9-year programmatic approval from USBR to transfer various CVP water supplies as follows:

- Transfer of CVP water to the Banking Projects for recharge.
- Transfer of CVP water to WMWC lands
- Recovery of CVP water previously banked in the Banking Projects for delivery to WMWC lands

Transfers of CVP water would be from CVP contractors (see Table 3 below) to WMWC either for direct agricultural use on their lands located within the CVP place of use and lands under temporary orders, or for banking in the Banking Projects for later recovery and delivery to their agricultural lands within the CVP place of use. This project would use existing facilities and involve no construction to execute.

Table 3 CVP Contractors that may Transfer and/or "Exchange" CVP water

Friant Division CVP Contractors	
Arvin-Edison Water Storage District	Chowchilla Water District
City of Fresno	City of Lindsay
City of Orange Cove	County of Madera
Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District	Exeter Irrigation District
Fresno County Waterworks No. 18	Fresno Irrigation District
Garfield Irrigation District	Gravelly Ford Water District
Hills Valley Irrigation District	International Water District
Ivanhoe Irrigation District	Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District[1]
Kern-Tulare Water District	Lewis Creek Water District
Lindmore Irrigation District	Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District
Lower Tule River Irrigation District	Madera Irrigation District
Orange Cove Irrigation District	Porterville Irrigation District
Saucelito Irrigation District	Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District
Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District	Stone Corral Irrigation District
Tea Pot Dome Water District	Terra Bella Irrigation District
Tri-Valley Water District	Tulare Irrigation District
Cross Valley CVP Contractors	
County of Fresno[2]	County of Tulare[3]
Hills Valley Irrigation District	Kern-Tulare Water District[4]
Lower Tule River Irrigation District	Pixley Irrigation District
Tri-Valley water District	
Delta Division CVP Contractors	
Banta Carbona Irrigation District	Byron-Bethany Irrigation District
City of Tracy	Coelho Family Trust
Del Puerto Water District	Eagle Field Water District
Fresno Slough Water District	James Irrigation District
Laguna Water District	Mercy Springs Water District
Oro Loma Water District	Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
Panoche Water District	Patterson Water District
Reclamation District No. 1606	San Luis Water District
Tranquillity Irrigation District	Tranquillity Public Utility District
West Stanislaus Irrigation District	The West Side Irrigation District
San Felipe Division CVP Contractors	
San Benito County Water District	Santa Clara Valley Water District
San Joaquin River Exchange Contractor Water Authority	
Central California Irrigation District	Columbia Canal Company
Firebaugh Canal Water District	San Luis Canal Company

San Luis Unit (West San Joaquin Division) CVP Contractors	
City of Avenal	City of Coalinga
City of Huron	Panoche Water District
Pacheco Water District	San Luis Water District
Westlands Water District	

[1]Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District is comprised of four districts: Lakeside Irrigation Water District, Kings County Water District, Corcoran Irrigation District, and Tulare Irrigation District.
[2]Including its subcontractors: Fresno County Service Areas #5, #10, and #14 and Fresno County Water Works #34.
[3]Including its subcontractors: Alpaugh Irrigation District, Atwell Island Water District, City of Lindsay, Smallwood Vineyards, Hills Valley Irrigation District, Saucelito Irrigation District, Stone Corral Irrigation District, Strathmore Public Utilities District, Styrotek, Inc., and City of Visalia.
[4]Previously combined with Rag Gulch Water District

requests that the foregoing approval apply to the following water types covering "routine" WMWC transfers that are expected to occur in the future:

- Transfers of Friant Division CVP Class 1 and Class 2 water, Uncontrolled Season Class 1 and Class 2 water, Section 215 water (un-storable flood flows from Millerton), San Joaquin River Restoration Program Unreleased Restoration Flows, San Joaquin River Restoration Program Recaptured/Recirculated Friant CVP water, or any other transferrable CVP water made available from any Friant Division CVP contractor.

- Transfers of South-of-Delta CVP agricultural water, Section 215 water (un-storable flood flows from the Delta), San Joaquin River Restoration Program Recaptured/Recirculated Friant CVP water, or any other transferrable CVP water made available from any South-of-Delta CVP contractor.

- Transfers of Cross Valley South-of-Delta CVP water supplies or any other transferrable CVP water made available from any Cross Valley CVP contractor.

CVP water banked within the Banking Projects will ultimately be delivered via recovery for direct delivery or exchange (for example, with Kern County Water Agency's SWP Table A or other water stored in San Luis Reservoir) for use on WMWC lands within the CVP place of use subject to the necessary approvals and requirements of the applicable parties and agencies. The program covers acquisition and delivery and storage for up to 200,000 AF of CVP water by WMWC in any 12-month period and recovery of up to 200,000 AF from the Banking Projects in any 12-month period.

WMWC intends for this request to reduce the administrative burden on USBR arising from its annual requests and provide timing and approval assurances for the applicable 9-year period.