



Irvine Ranch Water District Notice of Determination

To: Orange County Clerk Recorder Office of Planning and Research
County Administration South 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
601 N Ross Street Sacramento, CA 95814
Santa Ana, CA 92701

From: Irvine Ranch Water District
Water Resources & Environmental
Compliance
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Irvine, CA 92618

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

PROJECT TITLE: Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project **STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO.** 2019080009

PROJECT LOCATION - Specific: The project would be built within the IRWD service area at the site of the existing Syphon Reservoir, located in unincorporated Orange County, California, on the northeast side of Portola Parkway between Bee Canyon Access Road and State Route 133.

PROJECT LOCATION - City/County: City of Irvine / Orange County, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project would increase the capacity of the existing recycled water reservoir from approximately 500 acre-feet (AF) to 5,000 AF. The project would replace the existing engineered dam with a new engineered dam, increasing the existing 59-foot dam height to 136 feet and increasing the elevation of the dam crest from the existing 388 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to 466 feet amsl. A new spillway would be included with the new dam to protect the reservoir from overtopping. As part of the new design, the engineered embankment dam would include a seepage control drainage system and a circulation system for the reservoir. The existing strainer and disinfection facilities would be demolished, reconstructed and expanded at the toe of the new dam to provide filtration and disinfection. Additional project features include new onsite access and maintenance roads; on-site and off-site wetland and riparian mitigation areas; and potential recreational facilities.

Environmental review of the potential impacts associated with the change in status of Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*; CBB) to candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) has been completed, and Addendum No. 2 to the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project's Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been prepared. At the time the FEIR was certified in 2021, CBB was not a candidate for listing under CESA. In 2022, after the FEIR was certified, CBB became a candidate for State listing under CESA. The FEIR determined that construction of the expanded reservoir would temporarily remove and permanently displace native and non-native upland habitat and disturbed land cover around the reservoir, including various types of coastal sage scrub (CSS), which may serve as suitable foraging and nesting habitat for CBB. The purpose of Addendum No. 2 is to describe and evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the change in listing status of CBB pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164.

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Irvine Ranch Water District

PROJECT APPLICANT: Irvine Ranch Water District **PHONE:** (949) 453-5300

PROJECT APPROVAL: This is to advise that on July 26, 2021, the Irvine Ranch Water District's Board of Directors, at its meeting, acting as the Lead Agency, made the following determinations regarding the Syphon Reservoir Improvement project:

- (a) The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- (b) An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
- (c) Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
- (d) A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan was adopted for this project.
- (e) A Statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for this project.
- (f) Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

On May 12, 2025, the Irvine Ranch Water District's Board of Directors, at its meeting, approved Addendum No. 2 to the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project FEIR. Therefore, the following determinations are made in connection with the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project:

- (a) The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- (b) An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
- (c) Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
- (d) A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan was adopted for this project.
- (e) A statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for this project.
- (f) Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

Based upon the evidence submitted and as demonstrated by the analysis included in Addendum No. 2, the Board determined none of the conditions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent Environmental Impact Report have occurred; specifically:

- (a) The change in listing status of CBB does not represent a substantial change in the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project that would require major revisions to the FEIR because of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant environmental effects;
- (b) The change in listing status of CBB does not represent a substantial change with respect to the circumstances under which the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project would be undertaken that would require major revisions to the FEIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant environmental effects; and
- (c) The change in listing status of CBB does not represent new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the FEIR was certified as complete, that shows any of the following:
 - i. The Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the FEIR;
 - ii. Significant environmental effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the FEIR;
 - iii. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects, but IRWD declines to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
 - iv. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the FEIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but IRWD declines to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

The Final EIR with comments and responses, Addendum No. 1, Addendum No. 2, and record of project approval are available to the General Public at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, CA 92618.

STAFF CONTACT PERSON: Fiona Sanchez, Director of Water Resources **PHONE:** 949-453-5325



Authorized Signature

Director of Water Resources

Title

May 14, 2025

Date