

CEQA FINDINGS FOR A NEGATIVE DECLARATION

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES CEQA RESPONSIBLE AGENCY FINDINGS FOR CARMICHAEL WATER DISTRICT LADERA AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY WELL PROJECT

I. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The California Department of Water Resources (“Department”), as a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), makes the following findings with regard to the application submitted by Carmichael Water District (District) for state funding for a portion of the costs of constructing the Ladera Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Well Project (Project). The District, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, prepared and adopted an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (“IS/MND”) for the Project. In November 2023, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, as responsible agency (SCH # 2023090687), filed a Notice of Determination (“NOD”).

The Project consists of the construction and operation of a municipal water supply well and pump station within the service area of the District. The proposed Ladera Way Well is intended to provide the District directly, and the region indirectly, with additional water resources for typical municipal and industrial uses, or other purposes as determined by the District to supplement surface water entitlements in the event of a long- or short-term drought or surface water curtailment, operate and maintain the underlying groundwater basin under a regional conjunctive use program, enhance the reliability and redundancy of water supplies that are available to serve the District’s customers, and serve as a source of water supply in the event of a water infrastructure or water supply emergency.

The Project and potential environmental effects as a result of the Project are described in the IS/MND completed by the District. In brief, The Lead Agency (District) issued an Initial Study/Negative Declaration, in which the scope of mitigation for environmental effects of the Project was described and found that the proposed action would result in no impact or that impacts would be less than significant. Site preparation includes paving, fence installation, potential removal of up to six onsite trees (five ornamental and one blue oak), drilling a new well, and construction of one building to house the new well and pump. Prior to the start of construction and any tree removal, the District will obtain a Sacramento County Tree Removal Permit. Areas subject to the IS/MND would not include any work in streams, riverbanks, floodways, or levees. The Department, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, has reviewed and considered the documentation prepared by the District, the Lead Agency. The Department has carefully considered the environmental effects of the Project and has reached its own independent conclusion on whether and how to approve the provision of state funding for the costs of constructing the Project.

The Department’s role in the Project would be to provide funding to the District pursuant to a Funding Agreement (# 4600015463) for the Project construction costs. The Department has no police power authority over the Project, and it has no authority over the Project as a permitting or regulatory agency. During DWR’s responsible agency review, the District provided additional information to clarify that no trees were slated to be removed at the project site; therefore, no tree removal permits was obtained or provided.

Based on its independent review of the Project, the Department makes the following findings.

II. NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

Based on the Department's independent judgment and analysis, the Department concurs in the determination by the District that there is no substantial evidence that the Project would have a significant effect on the environment.

III. NO STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS OR FINDINGS REGARDING ALTERNATIVES ARE REQUIRED

Because the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment, CEQA does not require the Department to consider alternatives to the Project or adopt a statement of overriding considerations.

IV. NO SUPPLEMENTAL OR SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW IS REQUIRED

The Department finds that no supplemental or subsequent environmental review is required. In particular, the Department finds that there are no substantial changes in the Project, no substantial changes in the circumstances surrounding the Project, and no new information of substantial importance, which gives rise to a new significant environmental impact or otherwise triggers the need for additional CEQA review under Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The District, in November 2023, prepared an IS/MND to evaluate the Project for the potential to impact the environment. Based on the Department's independent review, the Department concurs in the determination made by the District.

V. ADOPTION OF FINDINGS BY THE DEPARTMENT

The Department hereby formally adopts the findings set forth herein.

Date
5/20/2025

Signature



Steve Rothert
Division Manager
Division of Multibenefit Initiatives