



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
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Fresno, California 93710
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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



To:
Office of Planning and Research
[CEQA Submit](#)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Chowchilla Bypass Turnout (Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration, No. EPIMS- MAD-56589-R4)

Project Location (Madera): The Project will occur at Cottonwood Creek in southwest Madera County approximately 10 miles east of the City of Firebaugh; Section 2, Township 13 South, Range 16 East; USGS 7.5 Minute Mendota Dam MDB&M. Latitude/longitude coordinates 36.83639, -120.30489; and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 042-181-005-000.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has executed Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement Notification No. EPIMS- MAD-56589-R4, pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code, to Aliso Water District.

Project activities will include the construction of a low water level channel and a new water diversion facility at a point of diversion on the Chowchilla Bypass and buried pipeline in Cottonwood Creek, in support of future diversion of flood flows to a newly constructed groundwater recharge basin.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:
Aliso Water District, represented by Katie Durham

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Statutory Exemption.
- ☐ Categorical Exemption.
- CEQA is suspended (see below)

Reasons why project is exempt: CDFW's issuance of an Agreement is generally subject to CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and its implementing regulations; however, CEQA is suspended per Executive Order N-7-22 (EO) for purposes of CDFW's issuance of this Agreement. Paragraph 13 of the EO states that CEQA and its implementing regulations are suspended for the following, to the extent

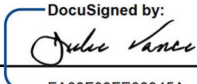
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necessary to address the impacts of drought: (1) specified actions taken by state agencies and specified actions taken by a local agency where the Department of Water Resources concurs that local action is required; and (2) any permits necessary to carry out actions under (1). Actions under (1) are recharge projects under either Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge or the Department of Water Resources Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program occurring on open and working lands to replenish and store water in groundwater basins that will help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought. Because the Project to which this Agreement applies involves construction of facilities for subsequent diversions of flood flows for application to open and working lands to replenish and store water in groundwater basins to help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought, no environmental review for this Agreement pursuant to CEQA is required at this point in time. Consequently, CDFW has not reviewed a certified environmental impact report or adopted mitigated negative declaration evaluating this project, nor has CDFW adopted related findings pursuant to CEQA. Similarly, in applying for this permit, Permittee relied on the CEQA suspension provided by Paragraph 13 of the EO.

CDFW Contact Person: Jackson Powell (Environmental Scientist); (559) 899-9758, Jackson.Powell@wildlife.ca.gov.

Signature:  Date: 6/6/2025

Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager

Date received for filing at OPR: _____