

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: City of Lakeport
225 Park Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

County Clerk
County of Lake
255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

PROJECT TITLE: **Green Ranch Production Well**

PROJECT APPLICANT: **Paul Harris, Public Works Utilities Director, City of Lakeport**

PROJECT LOCATION - Specific: **1387 Scotts Valley Road, Lakeport CA 95453**
APN: 005-027-95

PROJECT LOCATION - City: **Lakeport** COUNTY: **Lake**

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE,
PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF
PROJECT:

The proposed Green Ranch Production Well (Project) consists of construction and operation of one new groundwater production well for the City of Lakeport's (City's) municipal supply on an approximately 7.5-acre parcel at 1387 Scotts Valley Road in unincorporated Lake County, known as "Green Ranch." The well would be intended to replace the groundwater production of one existing well, located in Scotts Creek, that is nearing the end of its useful life and has limited utility, as described herein. As part of the Project, the existing 8-inch well at Scotts Creek would be decommissioned. (See attached supporting documentation for further details)

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY
APPROVING THE PROJECT:

City of Lakeport
Community Development Department

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY
CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT:

Paul Harris (Applicant)

EXEMPT STATUS: (check one)

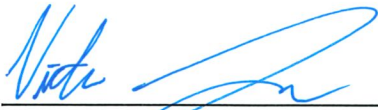
- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c);
- ☒ Categorical Exemption: Sections 15302 and 15303
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State Code No. _____

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS
EXEMPT:

The proposed well project qualifies for a Class 2 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines §15302) because it involves the replacement of an existing well that is nearing the end of its useful life. The new well will be located in the same groundwater basin, serve the same function, and have a similar extraction capacity (up to 900 gpm), representing negligible or no expansion of capacity. This makes it consistent with CEQA's exemption for replacement or reconstruction of utility systems.

The project also qualifies under the Class 3 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines §15303) as it entails the construction of a small new facility and installation of associated equipment. The scale and nature of the project align with examples of small infrastructure projects deemed exempt under Class 3.

Together, these exemptions support the conclusion that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment and is exempt from further CEQA review. (See attached supporting documentation for further details)



Victor Fernandez, Associate Planner
Signed by Lead Agency

June 25, 2025
Date

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: _____ Title: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Categorical Exemption Supporting Documentation

Green Ranch Production Well

MAY 2025

1 Introduction

The proposed Green Ranch Production Well (Project) consists of construction and operation of one new groundwater production well for the City of Lakeport's (City's) municipal supply on an approximately 7.5-acre parcel (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 005-027-95) at 1387 Scotts Valley Road in unincorporated Lake County, known as "Green Ranch." The well would be intended to replace the groundwater production of one existing well, located in Scotts Creek, that is nearing the end of its useful life and has limited utility, as described herein. As part of the Project, the existing 8-inch well at Scotts Creek would be decommissioned. The City has determined that the Project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction) and 15303 (New Small Structures). This document describes the Project and provides information to support the City's determination.

2 Background

The City provides water and wastewater service to over 5,000 customers through approximately 2,293 connections across an approximately 40-square-mile area southwest of Clear Lake in Lake County, California. For its potable water supply, the City relies primarily on groundwater from the Scotts Valley Groundwater Basin (California Department of Water Resources [DWR] Basin No. 5-14), supplemented by treated surface water from Clear Lake as needed to meet demand.

The City's existing water supply infrastructure includes four groundwater wells with a combined extraction capacity of approximately 2.8 million gallons per day (MGD) and one surface water treatment plant. The four groundwater wells are located west of the City limits; two are in Scotts Creek and two are on Green Ranch. The Green Ranch wells are 58 and 65 years old (reconstructed in 1966 and 1958), and the Scotts Creek wells are 53 and 54 years old (reconstructed in 1971 and 1970) (City of Lakeport 2008). Individual production rates range from approximately 300 gallons per minute (gpm) from the Scotts Creek 4-inch well (north well) to 700 gpm to 900 gpm from the 8-inch Scotts Creek well (south well) (City of Lakeport 2008). The Scotts Creek wells are the primary sources of supply from May through October, and the Green Ranch wells are primarily pumped during the winter months. The Scotts Creek wells are limited to summer/dry season production due to their proximity to the creek; production from the Scotts Creek wells is prohibited when standing water is within 150 feet of the well head. During the early summer, when water demand is relatively higher and the Scotts Creek well production is limited due to surface water flows, water needs must be supplemented by treated Clear Lake water.

Due to the limitations associated with the Scotts Creek wells, including site security concerns, inadequate sanitary seals, and their proximity to surface water flows, the City has identified a need to develop a replacement well to ensure a reliable year-round water supply. The well would support both current and future water needs, aligning with the City's long-term water sustainability strategy. The primary purpose of the Project is to provide a reliable water source and modernize the City's water infrastructure as older wells reach the end of their useful life and are taken out of service.

3 Project Location and Setting

The Project site consists of the City-owned Green Ranch parcel, located approximately 0.85 miles west of the City limits within unincorporated Lake County. The Green Ranch parcel is approximately 7.5 acres and contains two existing City-owned groundwater production wells and a solar array. The remainder of the site is flat, undeveloped land, with an approximate elevation of 1,460 feet above mean sea level. The undeveloped portion of the Project site consists primarily of land and has been under cultivation as either an orchard or cropland and has received periodic harvesting or mowing for over two decades; however, the site is not currently used for agriculture. Surrounding land uses consist of agricultural and rural lands. Access to the site is via Green Ranch Road. Roads to the Project site are unpaved and there is no fencing.

The two existing groundwater production wells are located along the northeastern boundary of the parcel and are located approximately 25 feet apart. The existing solar array on site provides electrical power to the submersible motors and variable frequency drive/supervisory control and data acquisition systems installed at the existing wells. These wells draw water from alluvial deposits believed to be buried stream channels, based on local well logs and recent site-specific geophysical surveys. The Project site is located within the Scotts Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Basin No. 5-14) which encompasses 7,320 acres (11 square miles) on the west side of Clear Lake, extending northwest along Scotts Creek north to Hidden Lake (DWR 2004). The Basin is bordered to the north and the west by the metamorphic and sedimentary rocks of the Franciscan complex and is bound to the south by the Big Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR 2004). The boundary between the Scotts Valley Groundwater Basin and the Big Valley Groundwater Basin to the south is not defined by a fault or other barrier to groundwater flow and may be hydraulically connected (DWR 2004). Based on the 2019 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Basin Prioritization results, the Basin is ranked as a very low-priority basin; therefore, a Groundwater Sustainability Plan is not required. Depth to groundwater on the Project site is estimated to be 38 feet bgs (Dudek 2024c).

4 Project Description

The Project would consist of construction and operation of the new Green Ranch production well, including the drilling, construction, development, and testing of the well, as well as associated site improvements. The preliminary design for the new well consists of a 12-inch-diameter well casing to a proposed depth of 120 feet bgs, installed in a 22-inch-diameter borehole drilled to 120 feet bgs. The new well is not anticipated to exceed the capacity of the existing 8-inch (south) Scotts Creek well to be replaced, which has an extraction capacity of 700 to 900 gpm, with preliminary estimates suggesting a production capacity for the new Green Ranch well of up to approximately 900 gpm. Pumps would be installed to provide the production capacity. The final design and construction specifications would be determined based on data obtained during the test boring phase. The new well would be connected to existing City water transmission lines that bisect the Green Ranch parcel through a new lateral extending less than 600 feet south on the parcel and off the property on easements/road right-of-way to connect to the City's existing distribution main. Electrical power for operation of the new well would either use the existing

solar array on site or a power drop would be installed from existing power lines located along the graded dirt road on the northern property line (Dudek 2024c).

Once the new well is drilled and approved by the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water (SWRCB-DDW) for production, the City would decommission the existing 8-inch well at Scotts Creek. This would be accomplished by physically removing the piping that supplies the City's distribution system. The 8-inch Scotts Creek well would remain intact and only be used as a back-up supply during an emergency. Any future use of this well would require approvals from SWRCB-DDW for re-activation.

4.1 Construction

Project construction would disturb approximately 0.7 acres. Construction activities are planned to commence in August 2025 and would last for approximately 36 months. Construction would occur in several phases which would generally proceed as follows: mobilization and site preparation including installation of temporary facilities and infrastructure; test borehole drilling and geophysical surveys; temporary test well construction, development, and testing; well drilling and equipping; well development and testing; well disinfection and capping; and demobilization and site cleanup. Standard construction equipment would include: a drill rig, pipe trailer, equipment storage, support vehicles, mud tank/mud processing system, settling tank(s) and/or baker tanks, and cuttings storage area. The work sequence would be as follows:

- Mobilize the drilling rig, development rig, support vehicles, and associated equipment to the well site.
- Provide at least three temporary tanks (e.g. 22,000-gallon Baker Tanks or Frac Tanks) for settlement of solids from groundwater generated during well development.
- Provide temporary pipeline and accessories required to convey water generated during the work (i.e. well development and well testing) to the point of discharge, if applicable. If no discharge point is provided, the water would be hauled off site.
- Drill three test boreholes to the top of bedrock (estimated to be 120 feet bgs) using mud rotary and collect drilling cuttings at 5-foot intervals and at changes in lithology.
- Conduct downhole geophysical surveys in all three of the test boreholes to the total depth.
- Construct 10-inch diameter temporary test well in one of the three test borings.
- Develop temporary test well.
- Install test pump in temporary test well to estimate discharge flow rate.
- Conduct 8-hour step drawdown test and 12-hour constant rate test at temporary test well.
- Remove temporary test well materials.
- At test well site, drill 28-inch conductor borehole and install 24-inch conductor casing including sanitary seal to 50 feet below ground surface.
- Ream the pilot borehole to the specified final diameters and depths.
- Perform a caliper survey on final reamed borehole.
- Install blank and screened well casing, filter pack, transition seal, and annular seal in accordance with the Plans and Specifications and final well design specified by the City.
- Complete initial well development by bailing, swabbing, and airlifting.
- Complete chemical well development by introducing development chemicals followed by swabbing and airlifting.

- Install temporary test pump and discharge piping.
- Conduct 12-hour step test and a 12- to 24-hour constant rate test.
- Perform video survey and plumbness and alignment testing.
- Perform well disinfection and wellhead capping.
- Demobilize equipment and complete final site cleanup and restoration to the satisfaction of the City.

To the extent feasible, construction activities would be limited to daytime hours, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, certain phases of construction, such as well construction and well testing work, would require a continuous 24-hour-per-day, 7-day-per-week schedule for the integrity of the well or test, including pilot borehole drilling, reaming, well installation, mechanical and chemical development, and constant-rate discharge testing. These 24-hour-per-day activities would be required during well drilling and construction, well development, and aquifer testing.

Temporary fencing may be installed to secure the well site and entire work area used for material storage and drilling operations including areas occupied by construction equipment, engines, motors, and other equipment. The temporary fencing would ensure the safety and security of equipment, materials, on-site personnel, and local residents. Although City directed work for municipal improvement may be exempt from the City of Lakeport noise ordinance (Municipal Code Section 8.20.030), temporary noise control barrier walls may be considered to limit the noise level at the property line. The length, height, and location of barrier walls would be adequate to assure proper acoustical performance. If the sound barrier walls are used, they would also act as the temporary construction safety fencing.

To determine the location for the permanent well, three test borings would be drilled to the top of bedrock, estimated to be approximately 120 feet bgs (see Figure 1). One test boring would be converted to a 10-inch-diameter temporary test well. An 8-hour step-drawdown test and 12-hour constant-rate test would be conducted at the test well. If the test well provides sufficient water for the Project, the borehole for the test well would be used as the borehole for the permanent new groundwater production well. Test borings that are not converted to a test well would be abandoned in accordance with the County of Lake and/or California well borehole destruction procedures.

The pilot borehole for the new groundwater production well would be drilled using a mud rotary drilling method¹ to a minimum borehole diameter of 12 inches. The pilot borehole would then be enlarged (reamed) to a 22-inch diameter to accommodate a 12-inch-diameter casing, 3-inch-diameter gravel feed tube, and a 2-inch annular spacing between the well casing, gravel feed tube, and borehole wall. Water for drilling and well construction would be supplied by the City from a nearby fire hydrant or from the two existing on-site groundwater wells. A temporary storage tank may need to be installed to store water on site with a temporary aboveground pipeline from the water source to the drill site, or a water truck may be required to bring water to the drill site. Drill cuttings would be temporarily stockpiled on site for drying and storage. The drill cuttings may be spread out on the site or would be removed from the site and disposed of at an appropriate disposal facility.

¹ Mud rotary drilling involves sending fluid down the annular space between the drillpipe and the borehole. The fluid reenters the drillpipe with cuttings entrained, removing cuttings back up the drillpipe and into a settling pit. As drilling continues, the excavated material is replaced with fluid.



SOURCE: Bing

DUDEK



0 65 130 Feet

Technical Specification - Drilling of Three Test Borings and the Construction, Development, and Testing of One Temporary Test Well - City of Lakeport

FIGURE 1

Site Map

Development of the well would begin after the drilling is completed and the annular seal has set for an adequate amount of time to remove fine particles, drilling fluids, and other obstructions from the wellbore and surrounding formation. Development would be performed by mechanical methods (air-lift swabbing) followed by chemical methods. Groundwater generated during well development would be diverted to on-site Baker tanks for clarification (settlement of solids). Water may be impounded temporarily on site for infiltration back into the ground. If the water cannot be discharged to the land surface, it would be contained, haul off-site, and disposed of at an appropriate disposal facility.

Various well pumping tests would be performed after final well development. Aquifer testing would include a 12-hour step-drawdown test, 12- to 24-hour constant-rate test, and recovery monitoring. Water quality testing would include a Title 22 analysis from samples collected at least 20 hours after the start of the 24-hour constant rate test. Groundwater samples would be collected and delivered to a California-certified laboratory under appropriate chain-of-custody to verify the water quality produced. A video survey of the well would be conducted. The well would then be disinfected using chlorine and the wellhead would be capped so that no material or foreign substances can enter the casing and tubing.

4.2 Best Management Practices

The City has identified the following best management practices (BMPs) that the contractor would be required to implement during construction activities:

- Dust control measures would be employed daily on site and may require a water truck and/or use of temporary hoses and pipelines to convey water.
- Wastewater and stormwater management measures would be instituted as required, including velocity dissipaters, solid waste controls for building materials and offsite tracking of sediment, and diverting surface flows within the Project area away from areas of open earth or stockpiles of building and other materials. Wastewater from general construction activities, such as drain water collection, aggregate processing, concrete batching, drilling, grouting, or other construction operations, would not enter flowing or dry watercourses without having met the authorized non-stormwater discharge requirements listed in State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, Section III.C., including proper notification to the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Pollution prevention measures including methods of dewatering, unwatering, excavating, or stockpiling earth and rock materials, which include prevention measures to control silting and erosion, and which would intercept and settle any runoff of sediment-laden waters.
- Turbidity prevention measures including, but not limited to, intercepting ditches, settling ponds, gravel filter entrapment dikes, flocculating processes, recirculation, combinations thereof, or other approved methods that avoid discharges into surface waters.
- Overall construction site management measures to address changes at the Project site as the Project moves through different phases and changes that account for rainy and dry season management practices.
- Pollution control measures and construction activity methods that will prevent entrance, or accidental spillage, of solid matter, contaminants, debris, or other pollutants or wastes, into streams, flowing or dry watercourses, lakes, wetlands, reservoirs, or underground water sources.
- Control measures for stockpiled or deposited materials prohibiting the stockpile or deposit of excavated materials, or other construction materials, near or on stream banks, lake shorelines, or other watercourse

perimeters where they can be washed away by high water or storm runoff, or can, in any way, encroach upon the watercourse.

- Monitoring, reporting, and record keeping, as necessary to achieve compliance with applicable permit requirements, if required for the Project, including but not limited to annual reports and rain event reports.

4.3 Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance of the new well would be consistent with ongoing City groundwater well operations at the Project site. The proposed groundwater production well would be operated on an as-needed basis and could be operated continuously or for shorter intervals, depending on the demand for water.

Ongoing Project operation and maintenance would be similar to existing conditions and would generate a negligible amount of vehicle trips to the Project site by City staff and no new City employees would be required. Routine operation and maintenance would entail regular activities and procedures to ensure the proper functioning, longevity, and safety of the well system, such as visual inspections of the wellhead, casing, pump, and associated equipment; water quality testing; and pump maintenance, including checking pump performance, lubricating parts, inspecting electrical connections, and replacing worn-out components as necessary. Regular and routine maintenance activities would not include any ground-disturbing activities. Maintenance vehicles would park on the Project site.

The City would routinely exercise the well, when not in regular use, to ensure that the facilities are maintained and remain operational. This would entail pumping water out of the well at a high rate to remove sediment, debris, and accumulated minerals to improve the flow of water into the well. Well exercising would be anticipated to occur monthly. Operators may fine-tune the exercise schedule according to the characteristics of the well. Groundwater pumped during exercising would be discharged to the land surface in accordance with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region Resolution R5-2023-0061 – Low Threat Waiver of Discharge to Land Surface.

4.4 Key Applicable Plans and Regulations

4.4.1 Lake County Environmental Health Division

The Project would comply with Lake County Environmental Health Division requirements for well drilling and construction. Under Executive order N-7-22, the well qualifies as exempt because it would provide groundwater to a public water supply system defined in Health and Safety Code Section 116275. The Project would require a well permit to comply with all requirements.

4.4.2 State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Board Waste Discharge Requirements

The Project would be required to comply with SWRCB Order No. 2003-0003-DWQ, Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Discharges to Land with a Low Threat to Water Quality (General WDRs), which establishes minimum standards for various low-threat discharges, including well development discharge and boring waste discharge, to protect water quality.

Resolution R5-2023-0061 by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, establishes a waiver for specific types of low-threat discharges to land surfaces. This waiver exempts certain discharges from the requirement to file WDRs, Reports of Waste Discharge, and Water Recycling Requirements, provided they pose minimal risk to water quality.

4.4.3 State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water Requirements

Before incorporating the new well into the City of Lakeport's municipal water supply system, the Project would be required to comply with the SWRCB Division of Drinking Water (DDW) requirements. These would include application for an amended domestic water supply permit as required by California Health and Safety Code, Division 104, Part 12, Chapter 4 (California Safe Drinking Water Act), Section 116550. In addition, a Water Supply Permit Environmental Intake form must be completed and include all CEQA documentation, well drilling technical specifications, well plot plans, Well Driller's Report and copy of Lake County well drilling permit, well data sheet, Drinking Water Source Assessment Program (DWSAP) documentation, well capacity test report, and initial Title 22 water quality results.

4.4.4 City of Lakeport Temporary Construction Meter Application

The Project would comply with City of Lakeport requirements for obtaining a temporary construction meter permit. Water would be supplied through a temporary line from a nearby hydrant or Green Ranch well. In order to access the City's water supply, a temporary construction meter application would need to be submitted to the City.

4.5 Permits and Approvals

It is anticipated that the Project would require the following permits and approvals listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Project Approvals

Authorizing Jurisdiction or Agency	Action
Lake County Environmental Health Division	
Well Permit	Approval
State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water	
Water Supply Permit Amendment	Approval
Regional Water Quality Control Board	
Waste Discharge Requirements	Approval/Enforcement
City of Lakeport	
Temporary Construction Meter Application	Approval

5 California Environmental Quality Act Compliance

5.1 Class 2 Categorical Exemption – Replacement or Reconstruction

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction), the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, are categorically exempt from CEQA. As relevant to the Project, such replacement or reconstruction projects include, but are not limited to replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302[c]).

The Project would replace the existing 8-inch (south) well in Scotts Creek, which has an extraction capacity of 700 to 900 gpm and is nearing the end of its useful life. The new well would provide an extraction capacity of up to approximately 900 gpm. The new well would be located within the same groundwater basin as the well to be replaced. Therefore, the Project would involve the replacement of existing groundwater infrastructure involving negligible or no expansion of capacity, and Class 2 applies to the Project.

5.2 Class 3 Categorical Exemption – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures or the installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures, are categorically exempt from CEQA. Examples of such new structures include, but are not limited to, up to three single family residences in an urban area; a multifamily residential structure with no more than four units; a commercial building not exceeding 10,000 square feet in an urbanized area; accessory structures; and an accessory steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical wastes (CEQA Guidelines Section 15303). The Project would fall under Class 3 as it constitutes a new small facility and would result in the installation of small new equipment.

5.3 Categorical Exemption Exceptions

The Project would not meet any of the exceptions for using categorical exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2, which prohibits the use of categorical exemptions if a project would:

- Be located in a sensitive environment (Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 only)
- Have significant cumulative impacts
- Have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances
- Result in damage to scenic resources within an officially designated scenic highway
- Be located on a site included on a list compiled pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource

Additional discussion about each of these exceptions is provided below.

5.3.1 Sensitive Environment Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[a])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a), a categorical exemption shall not be used when a project is located on a site with a sensitive environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The Project site contains agricultural and urban/developed land, both of which are not considered sensitive environmental resources. Based on a Biological Resources Assessment prepared for the Project, no sensitive vegetation communities were identified on the Project site (Dudek 2024b). The Project site contains potentially suitable habitat for three special-status bird species: tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), and white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*). No suitable nesting habitat for tricolored blackbird was observed in the biological study area (BSA) during the biological site reconnaissance. Grasslands, trees, and shrubs in the BSA provide nesting habitat for northern harrier and white-tailed kite which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Section 1503 of the California Fish and Game Code (Dudek 2024b). The Project would be required to comply with the MBTA, ensuring that any potential disturbance to nesting birds is avoided by conducting a pre-construction nesting bird survey or conducting construction activities outside of the nesting season. Therefore, the Project is not located on a site with a sensitive environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern and this exception does not apply to the Project.

5.3.2 Cumulative Impacts Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[b])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(b), a categorical exemption shall not be used when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant. Cumulative impacts could occur if past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects were to contribute incremental impacts on the same resources as the Project or result in impacts that coincide with Project impacts during construction or operation. The Project would not likely have a considerable contribution to potentially significant cumulative impacts in the following key environmental impact categories:

- **Groundwater Supply:** The Project would not contribute to cumulative groundwater impacts, as it is focused on replacing a Scotts Creek well that is approaching the end of its operational capabilities. The new well at Green Ranch would take over the production from these outdated wells without increasing the overall extraction from the groundwater basin. The Project would be located within the same groundwater basin, ensuring that the groundwater resources used remain consistent. The Project would not be designed to expand the existing production capacity of approximately 2.8 MGD.
- **Water Quality:** As the Project would require the construction contractor to comply with all relevant regulatory requirements related to stormwater and wastewater discharges, as part of standard construction specifications. The contractor would be required to implement BMPs to control and reduce discharges into receiving waters, as provided in Section 4.2. Therefore, the Project would not have a considerable contribution to potential cumulative water quality impacts.
- **Transportation:** As existing City staff would operate and maintain the new well and the Project site already contains existing wells, the Project would generate a negligible amount of vehicle trips to the site and therefore would not contribute to potential cumulative transportation impacts.
- **Noise:** Although City directed work for municipal improvements may be exempt from the City of Lakeport noise ordinance (Code 8.20.030), temporary noise control barrier walls may be considered to limit the noise level at the property line. Project operational noise would be limited by the use of an enclosure around the well to muffle sound from well operations and the well would be located away from sensitive noise receptors. Construction noise would be temporary and construction/drilling noise best management

practices would be incorporated into the Project construction specifications to limit the effects of construction noise. Therefore, the Project would not likely have a considerable contribution to potential cumulative noise impacts.

- **Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** As the Project would rely on electrical power, operational air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be limited with the Project. The operational air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the Project are expected to remain unchanged, as the new well would operate in the same manner as the existing wells. Since the Project would replace the Scotts Creek wells, the overall energy consumption and emissions associated with the well's operation would not substantially change. During construction, the contractor would be required to abate dust nuisance by spraying water, sweeping, or other means, as necessary.
- **Agriculture:** The Project site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance but is not currently used for agriculture (DOC 2025). The site is owned by the City of Lakeport and has been used for groundwater wells and solar facilities, and the Project would continue these existing uses of the site. Therefore, the Project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural use or interfere with agricultural operations, and would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to agricultural land conversion.

5.3.3 Unusual Circumstances Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[c])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(c), a categorical exemption shall not be used where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to “unusual circumstances.” Unusual circumstances may be established by showing that the project has some feature that distinguishes it from others in the exempt class, such as its size or location, and that there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect due to that unusual feature or circumstance, or by showing that the project would have a significant environmental effect. For the unusual circumstances exception to apply, it is not enough alone that there is a reasonable possibility the project would have a significant environmental effect; instead, there must be a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment *due to unusual circumstances*.

The nature of a project may be “unusual,” particularly if its scope and size differ from conditions in the surrounding vicinity. This includes whether the project is or is not consistent with the surrounding zoning and land uses, including consistency with the underlying general plan and zoning designations and development standards. Conversely, the scope and size may be “unusual” if the use, height, or density vastly differ from surrounding uses. Therefore, “the presence of comparable facilities in the immediate area adequately supports [a]n implied finding that there [are] no ‘unusual circumstances’ precluding a categorical exemption.” (*Walters v. City of Redondo Beach* (2016) 1 Cal. App.5th 809, 821, quoting *Bloom v. McGurk* (1994) 26 Cal.App.4th 1307, 1316.)

There are no unusual circumstances that differentiate the Project or Project site from similarly situated projects or properties. The Project is located on a City-owned site containing agricultural land, existing groundwater wells, and a solar array. The site possesses no unusual features or characteristics that distinguish it from other properties in the immediate area. The Project site is relatively level, is surrounded by other land with similar agricultural and rural land uses, and contains existing groundwater supply infrastructure; therefore, the Project would not change the existing use of the Project site. Project construction would be located toward the center of the Project site, away from adjacent residential uses and BMPs would be incorporated in construction specifications to address construction noise if necessary. There are no unusual circumstances surrounding the Project that would suggest a reasonable possibility of a significant environmental effect. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the Project.

5.3.4 Scenic Highways Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[d])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(d), a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway to the Project site is State Route (SR) 116, from SR-1 near Jenner to SR-101 near Coati, approximately 38 miles from the Project site. There are no officially designated state scenic highways located within Lake County; however, SR-29 is eligible for the state scenic highway program, approximately 0.8 miles east of the Project site (Caltrans 2024). State Route 29 runs generally north-south through the City of Lakeport. Due to the relatively flat topography of the area and intervening vegetation, the Project site is not visible from SR-29. Furthermore, the Project is a groundwater well, thus most components of the Project would be below ground. Therefore, the Project would not be visible from an eligible or officially designated state scenic highway and this exception does not apply to the Project.

5.3.5 Hazardous Waste Sites Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[e])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(e), a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (i.e., the Cortese List). The following Cortese List online data resources were reviewed during the preparation of this document: (1) the list of hazardous waste and substances sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC's) EnviroStor database (DTSC 2025); (2) the list of leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites from the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB's) GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2025); (3) the list of solid waste disposal sites identified by the SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (CalEPA 2025c); (4) the list of active Cease-and-Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB (CalEPA 2025b); and (5) the list of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code identified by the DTSC (CalEPA 2025a). The Project site is not included on the list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the Project.

5.3.6 Historical Resources Exception (CEQA Guidelines §15300.2[f])

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f), a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Under CEQA, in addition to historical built environment resources, both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites may qualify as historical resources if they meet criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

A Historic Properties Identification Report (HPIR) was prepared for the Project (Dudek 2025). The HPIR included a records search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC); the development of an area of potential effects (APE); a search of the Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File; an intensive-level survey of the APE for cultural resources; archival research; interested party outreach; the creation of an appropriate prehistoric and historic context; and recordation and evaluation of historic-era properties located in the APE under NRHP and CRHR designation criteria. No previously evaluated built environment historic properties or historical resources were identified within the Project APE as a result of a NWIC records search, extensive archival research, and field survey.

The two Green Ranch wells are over the age of 45 and were recorded and evaluated for historic significance. The Green Ranch wells are not currently designated or listed under any national or state registers, nor have they been previously identified as eligible for local designation. Dudek evaluated the wells in the Project APE in accordance with Section 106 and Section 15064.5 (a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code and found that the wells are ineligible for NRHP, CRHR or local designation through survey evaluation.

One historic-era archaeological resource isolate was identified during the site survey. Isolates are categorically ineligible for the NRHP or CRHR; therefore, this isolate is not considered a cultural resource under CEQA. Therefore, no cultural resources were identified within the Project APE. Should new cultural deposits and/or human remains be discovered at any time during construction activities, work would halt in that area and procedures set forth in the California Public Resources Code (Section 5097.98) and State Health and Safety Code (Section 7050.5) would be followed, beginning with notification to the Lake County Coroner. If Native American remains are present, the County Coroner would contact the Native American Heritage Commission to designate a Most Likely Descendent (MLD), who would be authorized to provide recommendations for the treatment of Native American human remains and any associated objects and materials.

Therefore, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as none are present on the Project site, and this exception does not apply to the Project.

6 Conclusion

The Project has been reviewed for compliance with CEQA. Given the foregoing analyses and findings, the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15302 and 15303, the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction) and Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

7 References

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- CalEPA. 2025b. List of Active Cease-and-Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the Water Board. Accessed March 10, 2025, at <https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CDOCAOList.xlsx>.
- CalEPA. 2025c. "Sites Identified With Waste Constituents Above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside The Waste Management Unit." Accessed March 10, 2025, at <https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CurrentList.pdf>.
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SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2025. "GeoTracker Database." Accessed March 10, 2025, at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=1387+Scotts+Valley+Road+Lakeport+CA>.