Print Form

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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

County Clerk
County of: Orange

From: (Public Agency): South Coast Water District
31592 West Street
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(Address)

Project Title: FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project

Project Applicant: South Coast Water District

Project Location - Specific:
See Figures 1a through 1k, attached.

Project Location - City: Laguna Beach, Dana Point, San Juan Capistrano Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
See attached.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: South Coast Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: South Coast Water District

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. State type and section number: Section 15301, Existing Facilities - Class 1(b)
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
See attached.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dylan LaFrance, PE, JD Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (949) 342-2178

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: Dylan LaFrance Date: 7/9/25 Title: SENIOR ENGINEER

- Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

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: _____

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MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA 92691
T 949.450.2525

June 19, 2025

Attachment to Notice of Exemption (Appendix E): FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project in Laguna Beach, Dana Point and San Juan Capistrano, California

1 Project Description

The South Coast Water District proposes to perform cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining of approximately 6,145 linear feet (LF) of existing sewer pipes in 11 different areas within Laguna Beach, Dana Point and San Juan Capistrano (Figures 1a through 1j, Project Sites). A majority of the work will be trenchless installation between the existing sewer manholes, but some isolated locations require repairs and excavation will be necessary to get access to the existing sewer pipe in those isolated areas. All work will be performed in the public right-of-way within developed areas. Excavations will range between 6 and 10 feet in depth and no road closures will be required to complete the work. All excavation and land disturbance activities would take place within existing right-of- and on land that was previously disturbed to construct the existing sewer lines and street improvements.

We understand that construction would likely occur sometime between July 2025 and November 2025. The pipe lining at the 11 sites would be constructed in sequence with construction periods ranging from two to three days with a maximum of three trucks required at each site. All sites will require lane closures and will be scheduled to occur outside of peak commuting hours. The project sites are all within existing roadway with no impact to any trees or other biological resources and would require only shallow excavations (maximum of 10 feet) into previously disturbed soils.

2 Categorical Exemption

The proposed project is categorically exempt under the “Class 1” categorical exemption (CE), Existing Facilities, as outlined in Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. “Class 1” exemptions consist of operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The key consideration is whether the project involves an expansion of use. One of the examples included under Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines is as follows: “Existing facilities of both investor and publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services.” The proposed project involves the minor alteration of publicly owned utility (South Coast Water District) equipment (air-vacuum relief valves) involving no expansion of use.

3 Exceptions to the Use of Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines provides several exceptions that would otherwise preclude the use of a CE:

- All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.
- A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- 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.
- 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.
- A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The following discussion describes why each of the exceptions to the use of a CE are not applicable to the proposed project. Because none of the exceptions precluding the use of a CE is applicable to the proposed project, the "Class 1" CE is appropriate.

Cumulative Impact

CEs, as defined in Section 15300 of the CEQA Guidelines, are projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. As such, the proposed project would not considerably contribute to cumulative impacts in the greater project region. In addition, other projects in the region would presumably be bound by their applicable lead agency to (1) comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements; and (2) incorporate all feasible mitigation measures, consistent with CEQA, to further ensure that their potentially cumulative impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Unusual Circumstances

The proposed project involves minor alterations to an existing utility within a fully developed, urban environment. It would not require the removal of any trees or other natural features or habitats. The proposed project is consistent with the type of period alteration inherent in effectively operating a public utility. No unusual circumstances have been identified related to the project sites or the scope of the project.

Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway

The proposed project sites are not within a state scenic highway. There are two eligible state scenic highway in the general vicinity of the project sites: (1) State Route 1 (Coast Highway) and (2) Interstate (I) 5 transition to State Route (SR) 74. Coast Highway is located adjacent to or within a few blocks of several of the project sites (Figures 1a through 1d). However, any views of the construction available to drivers on Coast Highway would be obstructed and fleeting. Additionally, construction at any single site would be temporary and of a short duration, not lasting more than 3 days. The nearest project site to the I-5 transition to SR 74 is 0.15-mile to the northeast but would not be visible from the scenic highway (Caltrans 2025). Therefore, neither of the nearby eligible state scenic highways would be impacted by the proposed project.

Section 65962.5 of the Government Code

Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, also known as the Cortese List, is a compilation of various lists compiled by several state agencies identifying facilities or sites that are impacted by environmental contamination or hazardous waste. The proposed project sites are not on any list compiled pursuant to the requirements of Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (CalEPA 2024).

Historical Resources

The proposed project does not involve the demolition of any structures and therefore has no potential to impact any historic built environment resources. Additionally, the proposed project would involve shallow excavation (maximum depth of 10 feet) within previously disturbed soils that do not have the potential to contain archaeological resources. As such, the project would have no impact on historical resources.

4 References

CalEPA (California Environmental Protection Agency). 2025. "Cortese List Data Resources." Accessed June 17, 2025. https://calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/CorteseList/.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2025. "California State Scenic Highway System Map." Accessed June 17, 2025. https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa.



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1a

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1b

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1c

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1d

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

FIGURE 1e

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

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SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

FIGURE 1f

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

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SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

FIGURE 1g

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

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SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1h

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

FIGURE 1i

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project

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SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

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FIGURE 1j

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project



SOURCE: South Coast Water District, 2025

FIGURE 1k

Gravity Sewer Lining Location Plan

FY25-26 Annual Gravity Sewer Lining Project

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