Irvine Ranch Water District
Notice of Exemption

To:	☑	Orange County Clerk Recorder County Administration South 601 N Ross Street Santa Ana, CA 92701	☑	Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121 Sacramento, CA 95814
From:		Irvine Ranch Water District P.O. Box 57000 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue Irvine, CA 92619-7000		

PROJECT TITLE: Michelson Water Recycling Plant Biosolids Lift Station and Sewer Pipeline Project

PROJECT LOCATION - Specific: 3512 Michelson Drive - see attached Figure 1.

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project involves upsizing an existing segment of IRWD's sewer pipeline, installing new sewer laterals, retrofitting IRWD's existing Stormwater Pump Station 3, upgrading IRWD's existing Biosolids Lift Station, and completing site improvements for Stormwater Pump Station 3. All work would be conducted entirely within the boundaries of IRWD's Michelson Water Recycling Plant (MWRP). The purpose of the project is to separate waste flows produced by the Biosolids and Energy Recovery Facility from stormwater flows to allow stormwater flows to continue being pumped to Pond C of the San Joaquin Marsh. The waste flows would continue to be pumped to MWRP's primary treatment. The combined volume of stormwater and waste flows proceeding from the Biosolids and Energy Recovery Facility would not be increased as part of the project; rather, existing waste flows would be re-routed so they can undergo appropriate treatment. No expansion of the existing or former use of the Biosolids and Energy Recovery Facility is proposed, and the MWRP would continue to have the same treatment capacity upon project completion.

Sewer Pipelines and Laterals

An approximately 600-foot segment of an existing 8-inch sewer pipeline would be removed and replaced with a new 16-inch sewer pipeline, and an approximately 260-linear-foot segment of existing 6-inch sewer pipeline would be removed and replaced with a new 12-inch sewer pipeline. The new sewer pipeline would connect to existing sewer laterals that convey waste flows from the solids handling building, microturbine area, dewatering feed pump station, fats/oils/grease receiving station, and digester control building. In addition, a new 6-inch sewer lateral would be installed to convey waste flows from the odor control system (approximately 80 linear feet) to the new sewer pipeline. Portions of the existing sidewalk, curb, and gutter would be removed and replaced along the pipeline alignments. During construction activities, wastewater flows would be temporarily conveyed from upstream sewer cleanouts to the storm drain lateral or temporary storage tank.

Stormwater Pump Station 3

A portion of Stormwater Pump Station 3 would be modified to bifurcate the existing wet well, isolating the nuisance (sewer) wet well. During construction activities, stormwater flows would be temporarily bypassed to MWRP's primary treatment. Work would occur during the dry season to minimize the need for bypassing.

Biosolids Lift Station

The existing nuisance pumps, piping, instruments, and controls in the Biosolids Lift Station would be replaced and upgraded. A new aluminum cover would be installed over the nuisance (sewer) wet well, and site improvements would be completed around the Biosolids Lift Station and Stormwater Pump Station 3. During construction activities, stormwater flows would be temporarily bypassed to MWRP's primary treatment. Work would occur during the dry season to minimize the need for bypassing.

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Irvine Ranch Water District

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

EXEMPT STATUS:

☑ Categorical Exemption: Class 1 "Existing Facilities", Section 15301
Class 2, "Replacement or Reconstruction", Section 15302
Class 3, "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures", Section 15303

☐ Statutory Exemption: _____

☐ Other:

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the action involves the following:

1) The minor alteration of the existing Stormwater Pump Station 3 and on-site sewer conveyance system involving negligible expansion of the existing use of these facilities and no expansion of the existing use of the Biosolids Energy Recovery Facility or MWRP;
2) The installation of replacement facilities, equipment, and appurtenances on the same sites as the existing infrastructure where the replacement infrastructure will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the existing Stormwater Pump Station 3 and on-site sewer conveyance system with no increase in the production capacity of the Biosolids Energy Recovery Facility or the treatment capacity of the MWRP; and
3) The construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures and the installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures within the existing Stormwater Pump Station 3 and along the existing on-site sewer and stormwater conveyance alignments.

These exemptions are authorized under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15301, 15302, and 15303 (Class 1 "Existing Facilities", Class 2 "Replacement or Reconstruction", and Class 3 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures"). Class 1 exempts from CEQA review any project involving the 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, such as existing facilities of publicly owned utilities used to provide sewerage services. Class 2 exempts from CEQA review any project involving 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, such as the replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity. Class 3 exempts from CEQA review any project involving the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. In addition, pursuant to Section 15300.2 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption under CEQA are applicable.

STAFF CONTACT PERSON: Emily Le, Environmental Compliance Analyst **PHONE:** 949-453-5384

Kristine Swan	District Secretary	August 12, 2025
Authorized Signature	Title	Date

FIGURE 1: PROJECT SITE MAP

MICHELSON WATER RECYCLING PLANT
BIOSOLIDS LIFT STATION AND SEWER PIPELINE

N
NO SCALE