State Water Resources Control Board

September 17, 2025

Mr. Alan Vera
Planada Community Services District
103 Live Oak Street
Planada, CA 95365

Dear Mr. Alan Vera:

INITIAL STUDY/ MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND) FOR THE PLANADA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT (WATER SYSTEM); PLANADA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (PROJECT); MERCED COUNTY; STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2025081195

DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY PERMIT AMENDMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to review the IS/MND for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (State Water Board, DDW) is responsible for issuing water supply permits pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project is within the jurisdiction of DDW Merced District. DDW Merced District issues domestic water supply permit amendments to the public water systems serviced with a new or modified source of domestic water or new domestic water system components pursuant to Waterworks Standards (Title 22 California Code of Regulations [Cal. Code Regs.] chapter 16 et. seq.). If a project proposes to create a new public water system, that system requires a domestic water supply permit to operate. If a project involves certain changes to an existing permitted public water system, a water supply permit amendment is required for changes to a domestic water supply source, storage, or treatment and for the operation of new water system components- as specified in the Cal. Code Regs. § 64556. The Water System will need to apply for a water supply permit amendment for a new domestic water source and operation of a new storage reservoir.

FUNDING

We understand that the Water System is also pursuing Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) financing for this Project. The State Water Board, Division of Financial Assistance, is responsible for administering the DWSRF Program (Program). The primary purpose for the Program is to implement the Safe Drinking Water Act and various state laws by providing financial assistance for drinking facilities improvements to provide clean potable drinking water, and thereby protect and promote health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the state.

All applicants seeking financing must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provide appropriate documents to the State Water Board so that it can fulfill its CEQA responsibilities, see CEQA Requirements. In addition, because the Program is partially funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency additional federal environmental documentation (cross-cutters) may be required. For additional Program information, the complete environmental package and instructions, please visit:
Drinking_Water_State_Revolving_Fund_Forms_and_Instructions.

Following are specific comments on the Water System's draft IS/MND:

- The Project falls within the San Joaquin Valley- Merced Basin, according to the Department of Water Resources, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act prioritization dashboard (DWR, SGMA Prioritization Dashboard). The San Joaquin Valley- Kings Basin is a high priority and critically overdrafted basin (ibid). The Department of Water Resources approved the San Joaquin Valley-Merced Basin Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan on August 4, 2023 (DWR SGMA Portal). Please explain if the new well will maintain the Water System's previous water production levels (e.g. replace an old well, etc.) or if the new well will increase production. If the new well will increase production levels, please discuss:
    - How much more water annually would be pumped and the potential impacts to the critically overdrafted basin.
    - If mitigation or minimization measures are needed to reduce/eliminate the Project's potential impacts to groundwater.
- As part of the Project, the Water System will drill a well and build a 750,000-gallon tank on a 1.4 acre-site within a floodplain (PDF pages 13 and 54). The well and tank site is classified as an abandoned residential property with concrete and outbuildings (PDF page 152). As part of Section 2.3 Project Description and, as needed, in the checklist:
    - Please discuss proposed and/or existing operational stormwater infrastructure that will help control flooding and treat runoff.
    - Discuss what materials will be removed from the property.
        - Is soil or water contamination, as a result of illegal dumping, a problem at the site? If dumping is a concern, please discuss the cleanup needed and how water quality will be protected.
    - Please discuss future security on the site, to ensure the protection of water quality.

If an application for funding will be submitted, please upload to Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool the following applicable documents for the proposed Project: (1) one copy of the draft and final IS/MND with the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), (2) the resolution adopting the IS/MND and the MMRP, (3) all comments received during the review period and the Water System's response to those comments, and (4) the Notice of Determination filed with the Merced County Clerk and

the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, State Clearinghouse. In addition, we would appreciate notices of any hearings or meetings held regarding environmental review of any projects to be funded by the State Water Board.

If funding will not be pursued, please forward the above requested documents with your permit amendment application to the State Water Board, DDW Merced District Office at DWPDIST11@waterboards.ca.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Water System's draft IS/MND. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (916) 449-5285, or by email at Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov or contact Mrs. Bridget Binning at (916) 449-5641, or by email at Bridget.Binning@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz

Digitally signed by Lori Schmitz
Date: 2025.09.17 08:32:35 -07'00'

Water Boards

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

cc: State Clearinghouse

Bridget Binning, Division of Financial Assistance

Abbygayle Guevara, Division of Financial Assistance

Brenda Lopez, Division of Drinking Water

Orlando Gonzalez, Division of Drinking Water