

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

FROM: CA. Dept. of Water Resources
Calif. Dept. of Water Resources
Northern Region Office
2440 Main Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080

PROJECT TITLE: Merced Irrigation District Stream Gage Reactivation and Upgrades - CalSIP

SCH#: 2025091317

PROJECT SPONSOR: Merced Irrigation District

PROJECT SPONSOR CONTACT PERSON: Kristine Morris

PHONE NUMBER: 1-209-354-2863

PROJECT LOCATION: Merced Falls Forebay, Bear Creek, Miles Creek, near Merced in Merced County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

As part of the California Stream Gage Improvement Program, the California Department of Water Resources has executed a contract with the Merced Irrigation District to reactivate one stream gage at Merced Falls Forebay and upgrade three existing stream gages located on Miles Creek at Cunningham Road, Bear Creek at the Le Grand Canal, and Bear Creek at the Fairfield Canal. The proposed work involves minor alterations to the existing stations, including installation of new data loggers, telemetry equipment, a wire weight gage, and a staff gage. See attached description for further details.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: California Department of Water Resources

PUBLIC AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Brian Humphrey

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(s): 15301. Existing Facilities,
15302. Replacement or Reconstruction,
15306. Information Collection
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number(s):
- ☐ Other:

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

The proposed stream gage reactivation and upgrades consist of minor alterations to existing facilities and does not involve the expansion of the existing use. The proposed reactivation and upgrades will improve California's stream gage network by monitoring hydrologic conditions and providing real-time data to the public. Proposed activities qualify for categorical exemptions 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction), and 15306 (Information Collection). Proposed activities will take place within previously disturbed areas with a minimal footprint and will not result in a significant impact to the environment and none of the exceptions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.

Signature: Brian Humphrey Date: 12/3/2025

Brian Humphrey, Sr. Environmental Scientist, (530) 317-8623

Project Title: California Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP) Initiative – Merced ID Data sharing

Description of Project:

The primary purpose of this project is to improve stream gage infrastructure and data availability as part of the California Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP). Through this program, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) provides funding to public agencies to upgrade, reactivate, or install new gages to enhance the state's stream gage network. The project, implemented by the Merced Irrigation District (MID), will carry out repairs and upgrades of flow measurement stations at four locations in eastern Merced County to provide real-time stream data to the public.

Project Exemption:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1)

- **Bear Creek at Le Grand Canal (Upgrade):** The project consists of minor alterations to an existing public facility. The work, which potentially includes installing a new wire weight gage and conducting flow measurements, does not involve any significant expansion of the existing use but improves its function.
- **Bear Creek at Fairfield Canal (Upgrade):** This is a minor alteration to an existing public facility, as it focuses on potentially installing a staff gage and conducting flow measurements. This work fits the description of a minor alteration and does not involve any expansion of the existing use.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Class 2)

- **Merced Falls Forebay (Reactivation):** The proposed work, which involves reactivating a historical site by potentially installing a new data logger and telemetry system within an existing recorder hut, is a reconstruction of an existing facility. It has substantially the same purpose and capacity as the original, allowing for the re-establishment of a historical data record.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 (Class 6)

- **Miles Creek at Cunningham (Upgrade):** The project's primary purpose is basic data collection and resource evaluation. The work involves potentially bringing the station into the CDEC system with a new data logger and telemetry to make its data publicly available, which is an information gathering activity that does not result in any environmental disturbance.