
State Water Resources Control Board

December 17, 2025

Yerlys Hernandez
City of McFarland
401 West Kern Avenue
McFarland, CA 93250

CITY OF MCFARLAND (CITY), INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE
DECLARATION (IS/MND) FOR THE WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND
TREATMENT PROJECT (PROJECT), STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2025111093

Dear Yerlys Hernandez:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the IS/MND for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), issues domestic water supply permits under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project falls under DDW's Visalia District jurisdiction. The Visalia District issues permit amendments according to the Title 22 California Code of Regulations (Cal. Code Regs.) chapter 16. Public water systems need a permit amendment for modification of the water supply including new sources, new reservoirs with 100,000-gallon capacity or greater, service area expansions of twenty percent or more, and treatment design capacity or process changes as per Cal. Code Regs. § 64556. The City will need to apply for a water supply permit amendment for the new drinking water source, storage tank, and treatment changes.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the IS/MND:

- The IS/MND indicates the Project is a replacement well (PDF pages 63 and pages 70). As part of Section IV. Project Description and all references throughout the IS/MND, please clarify whether the new well will replace the capacity lost from the Browning Road well and if the Browning Road Well will be destroyed.
- Wells that are not properly destroyed may be sources of groundwater contamination. If the Browning Road Well will be destroyed, discuss how the well will be properly destroyed according to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) regulations.
- The Project falls within the San Joaquin Valley-Kern County Subbasin, a high priority and critically overdrafted basin according to the DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Act prioritization dashboard.

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | ERIC OPPENHEIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Please discuss the City's historical groundwater extraction baseline with the Browning well, in acre feet per year (Baseline).
- Please also discuss recharge commitments in acre feet per year, that will be used to balance the new well's pumping, if applicable.
 - If the Baseline will not be exceeded, please reconsider the City's determination in the Hydrology and Water Quality Section, question (b) regarding the Project substantially decreasing groundwater supplies, including the possibility of removing the HYD-1 mitigation measure, as needed.
 - If the Baseline will be exceeded, please include in the HYD-1 mitigation measure, monitoring during the wells operation, not just construction, and include what actions will be taken to reduce groundwater overdraft based on the monitoring. Please note, monitoring by itself will not prevent significant impacts (E.g. overdraft of the groundwater basin).
- Please then update the Utilities and Service Systems Section discussion on sufficient water supplies to be consistent with the Hydrology and Water Quality Section, question (b). (PDF page 70).

When the CEQA process is completed, please forward the following items with the permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Visalia District at DWPDIST12@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), and comments received and the lead agency responses as appropriate;
- The Resolution or Board Minutes adopting the IS/MND, and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz

Digitally signed by
Lori Schmitz
Date: 2025.12.17
17:13:31 -08'00'

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
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Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Adam Forbes
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Visalia District

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