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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

Notice of Exemption

To: ☒ Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Cruz
Governmental Center
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

☒ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: City of Santa Cruz Water Department, 212 Locust Street, Suite C, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Project Title: Beltz 10 Aquifer Storage and Recovery & Beltz 11 Well Injection Pilot Tests

Project Address: Beltz 10 Well Facility 977 34th Ave. Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Assessor's Parcel No.: 032-032-22

City of: unincorporated Santa Cruz County

County of: Santa Cruz

Project Description: The City of Santa Cruz Water Department is seeking to pilot test aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) and well injection at its existing Beltz 10 well facility, which has two wells on site, Beltz 10 and Beltz 11, as part of a feasibility study to assess the viability of diverting excess surface water to the Santa Cruz Mid County Groundwater Basin. The Beltz 10 well facility is shown on figure one.

The ASR pilot testing of the Beltz 10 well seeks to field demonstrate the potential application of ASR in the in the A/AA unit Purisima Aquifer system. A new monitoring well will be installed as part of this work. The injection pilot testing of the Beltz 11 well seeks to investigate the potential to raise water levels in the Tu aquifer. The pilot testing results will be used to assess viability of the storage of drinking water underground at the Beltz 10 well facility and will provide the basis for the design and permitting for a long-term full-scale ASR and/or well injection project.

Preparation of Beltz 10 and Beltz 11 wells for pilot testing will include downhole cleaning procedures and modifications to the wells to establish a connection to the distribution system, retain or exchange pumps and add appurtenances.

The ASR pilot test at Beltz 10 requires installing a monitoring well at the City's existing Beltz 10 well facility. This new monitoring well will be used to collect water level and water quality data. The monitoring well will be 2.5 inches in diameter. Drilling will be performed using the direct rotary method with bentonite-based fluid, which will be hauled offsite for disposal. Higher turbidity discharges from well development will be routed to the to the Beltz Water Treatment Plant (Beltz WTP) reclaim tank, which drains to the sanitary sewer system. Lower turbidity discharges from well development will be routed via the existing raw water pipeline to the unnamed creek at 30th Ave, a tributary to Moran Lake. A monitoring well vault and manhole will be installed to provide access for instrumentation, monitoring, or sampling.

All construction activities will occur during working hours Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm consistent with County noise ordinance requirements. Construction of the monitoring well will require 12 working days. Some tree limbs will be required to be removed to allow the drill rig to access the site.

The ASR pilot test at Beltz 10 will involve three repeated injection storage and recovery cycles with increasing quantities of water. Cycle 1 is expected to recover about 0.44 million gallons (mg). Cycle 2 is expected to recover about 3 mg. Water from Cycles 1 and 2 will be routed via the existing raw water pipeline to the unnamed creek at 30th Ave, a tributary to Moran Lake. Cycle 3 injection operations, if water quality pilot testing results from Cycles 1 and 2 are favorable, will result in the recovery of 13 mg that will be treated at the Beltz WTP will go into the distribution system. Water levels will be monitored after recovery.

The injection pilot test at Beltz 11 will involve two repeated injection storage and recovery cycles at with increasing quantities of water extracted after injection. Cycle 1 is expected to recover about 0.1 million gallons (mg). Cycle 2 is expected to recover about 1 mg. Cycle 3 injection operations, if water quality pilot testing results from Cycles 1 and 2 are favorable, will result in the storage of 10 mg. Water levels at an existing monitoring well will be monitored to assess the response to injection at Beltz 11.

Noise typical of existing operation noise will occur during pilot testing. The pilot testing is expected to last up to 150 days from 2026 to 2027.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Santa Cruz Water Department

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Santa Cruz

Exempt Status: (check one)

_____	Ministerial Project (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(1); 14 Cal Code Regs §15268).
__X__	Categorically Exempt (14 Cal Code Regs §15301, §15306).
_____	Declared Emergency (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(3); 14 Cal Code Regs §15269(a)).
_____	Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(4); 14 Cal Code Regs §15269(b)(c)).
_____	Statutory Exemption (Code/Section NA).
_____	The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (14 Cal Code Regs §15061(b)(2)).

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project is exempt under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines §15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, for operation, maintenance, permitting or minor alteration of existing public facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, and §15306, Class 6, Information Collection, for scientific data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a serious or major disturbance of an environmental resource.

Additionally, the project is not barred by the applicable exceptions for taking a Class 1 or Class 6 Categorical Exemption (14 Cal Code Regs §15300.2):

- (a) Location. A project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may be significant in a particularly sensitive environment. A Class 6 exemption applies in all instances except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. Although the proposed construction of monitoring well occurs within the Santa Cruz County Coastal Zone, construction activities will occur within the existing footprint of an existing facility footprint and new facilities will be underground.
- (b) Cumulative Impact. Class 1 and 6 exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant. The Beltz 10 ASR pilot test, including monitoring well installation, and Beltz 11 injection pilot test will not result in a cumulative impact of successive projects overtime because this project is fully contained within the facility footprint and construction activities will be temporary and isolated.

- (c) Significant Effect. Class 1 and 6 exemptions cannot 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. There are no unusual circumstances that apply to this location.
- (d) Scenic Highways. The pilot testing will not damage scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. The site is not near or within the viewshed of a designated scenic highway.
- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites. The site is not located on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (Cortese List).
- (f) Historical Resources. The pilot testing is not anticipated to cause an adverse change to a historical resource. There are no known cultural or historic resources in the area and no structures will be affected.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Heidi Luckenbach **Phone:** (831) 420-5214

Department: City of Santa Cruz Water Department **Address:** 212 Locust St., Suite C, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Signature: Heidi R Luckenbach **Date:** 12/9/2025

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

Title: Water Director ☐ Signed by Applicant

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

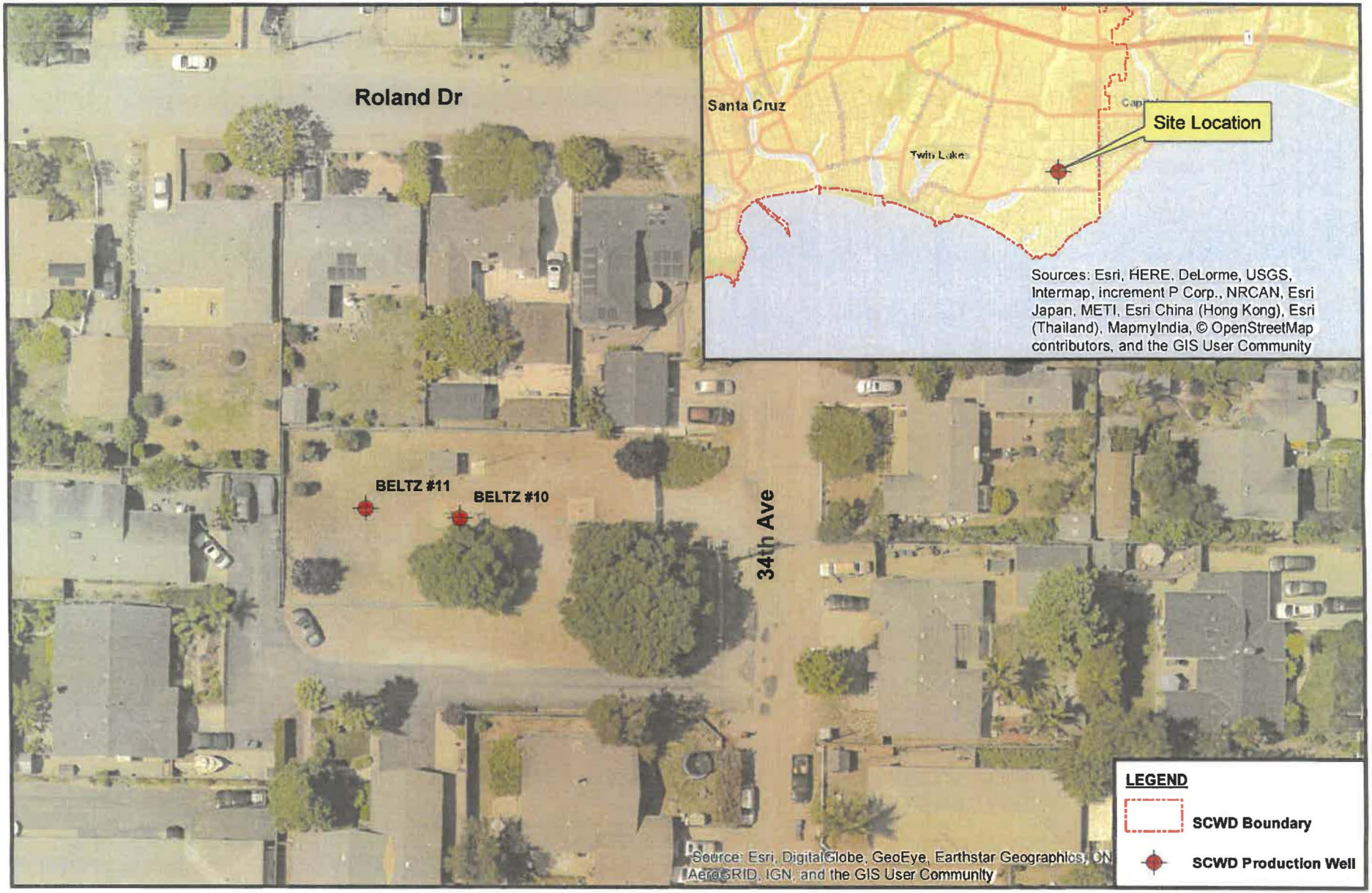
Date Received for filing at County Clerk: _____

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN POSTED AT THE CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OFFICE FOR A PERIOD COMMENCING 12/10/2025

AND ENDING 1/15/2026

September 2023
Project No. 15-0116



PUEBLO water resources

N
W E
S

1 inch = 50 feet

0 25 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 1. SITE LOCATION MAP
Beltz 10 and 11
Santa Cruz Water Department