

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
 P.O. Box 3044
 Sacramento, CA 958112-3044

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

PROJECT TITLE: Ventura County Stream Gage Install and Upgrade - CalSIP Upgrade

SCH#: 2025121206

PROJECT SPONSOR: Ventura County Watershed Protection District

PROJECT SPONSOR CONTACT PERSON: Ronald Marotto

PHONE NUMBER: 1-805-654-2044

PROJECT LOCATION: Piru, Simi Valley, and Lake Casitas Dam in Ventura County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

As part of the California Stream Gage Improvement Program, the California Department of Water Resources has executed a contract with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District to upgrade existing stream gage infrastructure at three sites and install one new stream gaging station. Proposed activities would include the installation of a radar gage on an existing bridge structure on the Santa Clara River (Torrey Road), upgrade existing equipment and install a camera upstream of existing station on Hopper Creek, and upgrade existing equipment on Arroyo Tapo (Walnut Avenue) and Lake Casitas Dam (see attached Scope of Work).

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:

Proposed installation of new equipment would take place on an existing bridge structure and/or within previously disturbed areas. Proposed upgrades and maintenance activities would occur within the same footprint of the existing stream gage stations, and provide the same purpose. Proposed activities provide real-time data, monitor hydrologic conditions, and provide hydrological information to the public. Proposed activities qualify for categorical exemptions 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction), and 15306 (Information Collection). Proposed activities will not result in a significant impact to the environment and none of the exceptions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. Furthermore, proposed activities would not result in additional ground disturbance or changes to the streambed or bank.

Signature: Brian Humphrey Date: 3/2/2026

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

California Stream Gage Improvement Program

**County Of Ventura-Watershed Protection District
Agreement Number 4600016258**

Scope of Work

NEW INSTALLATION AND UPGRADES OF STREAMGAGING STATIONS PROJECT (CAL SIP)

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to upgrade existing stream gaging infrastructure at three sites and install one new gaging station which will contribute to important flow data as a part of the California stream gage network. Through the Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is actively improving California's stream gage network by funding public agencies to upgrade existing gages, reactivate historical gages, or install new gages on natural waterways across the state.

Watershed Protection District (WPD) has been awarded \$62,000 grant funding through CalSIP. The funding will be used to upgrade three existing systems and install one new system. The work involves no new maintenance in the streams, less than 10 square feet of concrete footing and bollards installed in a previously disturbed area, little to no vegetation removal or trimming, and no damage to scenic resources. Monthly, quarterly or annual site visits to the gages for data collection and maintenance would occur depending on the site.

The project activities are exempt from CEQA under Categorical Exemptions. The project falls under Class 1 Section 15301-Existing Facilities for upgrades to existing systems because it comprises operation, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities, and the new system being installed is considered a minor alteration of an existing facility (a bridge). The project falls under Class 4 Section 15304-Minor Alterations to Land for the new installation of camera equipment at one station. The following stations will be installed/upgraded under this project:

- **Santa Clara River at RR Bridge above I5 (*Likely to move to Torrey Road*)**
 - New stream monitoring gage installation
 - 34°25'33.34"N 118°34'44.24"W (Site ID 2719-01)
 - (*Torrey Rd Location 34°23'41.0"N 118°47'55.4"W*)
- **Hopper Creek near Piru CA**
 - Stream gage upgrade and camera install
 - 34°24'02.50"N 118°49'36.30"W (Site ID 2722-01)
- **Arroyo Tapo at Walnut**
 - Stream gage upgrade
 - 34°17'49.70"N 118°43'15.60"W (Site ID 2724-01)
- **Lake Casitas at Dam**
 - Lake level monitoring equipment upgrade
 - 34°22'23.00"N 119°19'59.60"W (Site ID 2728-01)

Santa Clara River

The proposed location for this new stream gaging system is at Torrey Road Bridge near Piru. The new gage will be a radar unit, installed by either clamping the radar unit to the bridge rail along Torrey Road or installing it to the bridge through four small anchor holes. To install the unit, no major construction to the bridge or channel would occur and there would be little to no ground disturbance. This location was selected due to the low vegetation growth along the channel which will likely require little to no vegetation maintenance. This is a non-contact gage. Monthly to quarterly site visits would be conducted to check the equipment, change batteries, download data, and measure stream flow. Below is a photo of a similar unit to show what this site might look like.



Photo from Ridgeview gaging location to show example of radar installation. The smaller box in front left is not part of the radar box.

Hopper Creek near Piru CA

Hopper Creek near Piru has an existing stream gaging system that would be updated and includes the addition of a new camera. The proposed camera installation site is upstream within the walls of the County property (see photo). The camera pole requires a two foot by three foot concrete base that may require shovel ground disturbance in the small work area. All work would be done with hand tools. The system equipment would be similar to an existing station, called the Arundell station, pictured below. No work will occur in the channel and no new maintenance activities are proposed at this site. Monthly site visits would continue to be conducted to check the equipment, change batteries, download data, and measure stream flow. The camera site would be visited on an annual basis, unless maintenance of any kind was needed.



Photo shows two possible locations for the camera installation within the walls on the County property.



Photo from Arundell Camera location to show example of camera installation & concrete base.

Arroyo Tapo at Walnut

The existing stream gaging system at this location will be upgraded. The equipment that will be upgraded is within a box mounted above the channel. While there is some vegetation near the channel, it is unlikely that maintenance events would occur (none have occurred at this location to date). Possible debris clearing could be required. Annual site visits would continue to check the equipment, change batteries, and download data.



Photo of current Arroyo Tapo at Walnut stream gage.

Lake Casitas at Dam

The bubbler stream gaging equipment at this location will be upgraded. The bubbler is located within the concrete dam house mounted on the wall. No work outside of the dam house would occur. The new bubbler system will be mounted in the same wall location. Annual site visits would continue to be conducted to check the equipment, change batteries, and download data. This site is checked daily by Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) staff who can inform WPD hydrology staff if there are any issues requiring additional site visits.



Photo of the concrete dam house which houses the lake level system.



Photo showing current system at Lake Casitas which is inside the dam house mounted on the wall.