

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Orange

From: (Public Agency): Santa Margarita Water District
26111 Antonio Parkway
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

(Address)

Project Title: Upper Hunt Club Reservoir - Communication and Solar Equipment Upgrade

Project Applicant: Santa Margarita Water District

Project Location - Specific:

30561 Steeplechase Drive, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Project Location - City: San Juan Capistrano Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Extension of concrete pad and fence surrounding the existing tower and installing a new ground-mounted battery enclosure with attached solar panels near the tower. The new enclosure is being installed to provide sufficient runtime to keep the reservoir communicating during cloudy weather. Continuous communication is essential for monitoring & controlling the reservoir's water level, insuring it remains sufficient for serving customers in the area.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Margarita Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Margarita Water District

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: _____
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 15301

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed cabinet installation is located within the District's site property line and is covered under Class 1: Existing Facilities under the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301

Lead Agency

Contact Person: John Sanatar Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 949-285-5927

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? x Yes No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 12/17/25 Title: SCADA Analyst II

▪ Signed by Lead Agency ▪ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____



ORANGE COUNTY
CLERK-RECORDER
CEQA FILING COVER SHEET

202585001219

FILED

December 17, 2025

HUGH NGUYEN

CLERK - RECORDER

By H. Nguyen
Deputy clerk

30-12/17/2025-0973

THIS SPACE FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Complete and attach this form to each CEQA Notice filed with the County Clerk-Recorder

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

Project Title

UPPER HUNT CLUB RESERVOIR-COMMUNICATION AND SOLAR EQUIPMENT
UPGRADE

Check Document being Filed:

- ☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
☒ Notice of Exemption (NOE)
☐ Other (Please fill in type):

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE ORANGE
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER ON 12/17/2025
Posted 12/17/2025 Removed _____
Returned to agency on _____
DEPUTY 428

Filing fees are due at the time a Notice of Determination/Exemption is filed with our office. For more information on filing fees and No Effect Determinations, please refer to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 753.5.

FILED

DEC 17 2025

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY: MG DEPUTY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: ☐ Office of Planning and Research P. O. Box 3044, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044	FROM: Santa Margarita Water District (Public Agency) 949.459.6400
☒ Clerk of the Board of Supervisors or County Clerk County of:	Address: 26111 Antonio Parkway, Suite 100 Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

1. Project Title:	Upper Hunt Club Reservoir – Communication and Solar Equipment Upgrade
2. Project Applicant:	Santa Margarita Water District
3. Project Location – Identify street address and cross streets or attach a map showing project site (preferably a USGS 15' or 7 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name):	Upper Hunt Club Z1-574 Reservoir 30561 Steeplechase Dr. San Juan Capistrano, 92675 APN: 650-391-06 Intersection of Steeplechase Dr. and Golden Ridge Ln. in the City of San Juan Capistrano, CA.
4. (a) Project Location – City: Mission Viejo (Unincorporated area)	(b) Project Location – County: Orange
5. Description of nature, purpose, and beneficiaries of Project:	The project includes extending the concrete pad and fence surrounding the existing tower and installing a new ground mounted battery enclosure with attached solar panels near the tower. This new enclosure is being installed to provide sufficient runtime to keep the reservoir communicating during long periods of cloudy weather. This continuous communication is essential for monitoring and controlling the reservoir's water level, ensuring it remains sufficient for serving customers in the area.
6. Name of Public Agency approving project:	Santa Margarita Water District
7. Name of Person or Agency undertaking the project, including any person undertaking an activity that receives financial assistance from the Public Agency as part of the activity or the person receiving a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement of use from the Public Agency as part of the activity:	Santa Margarita Water District
8. Exempt status: (check one)	
(a) ☐ Ministerial project.	(Pub. Res. Code § 21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guidelines § 15268)
(b) ☐ Not a project.	

(c)	☐	Emergency Project.	(Pub. Res. Code § 21080(b)(4); State CEQA Guidelines § 15269(b),(c))
(d)	☐	Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:	
(e)	☐	Declared Emergency.	(Pub. Res. Code § 21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guidelines § 15269(a))
(f)	☒	Statutory Exemption. State Code section number:	The proposed cabinet installation location is located within the District's site property line and is covered under Class 1: Existing Facilities under the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.
(g)	☐	Other. Explanation:	
9.	Reason why project was exempt:		
10.	Lead Agency Contact Person:		John Sanatar, SCADA Analyst II
	Telephone:		949-285-5927
11.	If filed by applicant: Attach Preliminary Exemption Assessment (Form "A") before filing.		
12.	Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes ☐ No ☒		
13.	Was a public hearing held by the Lead Agency to consider the exemption? Yes ☐ No ☒		
	If yes, the date of the public hearing was: _____		

Signature: Pam Butler

Date: December 16, 2025 Title: Chief Engineer

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☒ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for Filing: 12/16/2025

(Clerk Stamp Here)

FILED

DEC 17 2025

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY: MG DEPUTY

CERTIFICATE OF DETERMINATION

(If Notice of Exemption filed by Project Applicant, Project Applicant must Attach to Notice of Exemption)

1. Name or description of project:	Upper Hunt Club Reservoir – Communication and Solar Equipment Upgrade		
2. Project Location – Identify street address and cross streets or attach a map showing project site (preferably a USGS 15' or 7 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name):	Upper Hunt Club Z1-574 Reservoir 30561 Steeplechase Dr. San Juan Capistrano, 92675 APN: 650-391-06 Intersection of Steeplechase Dr. and Golden Ridge Ln. in the City of San Juan Capistrano, CA.		
3. Entity or person undertaking project:	A. Santa Margarita Water District		
	B. Other (Private)		
	(1) Name		
	(2) Address		
4. Staff Determination: The Lead Agency's Staff, having undertaken and completed a preliminary review of this project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Lead Agency's Local Guidelines for Implementing CEQA has concluded that this project does not require further environmental assessment because:			
a. ☐	The proposed action does not constitute a project under CEQA.		
b. ☐	The project is a Ministerial Project.		
c. ☐	The project is an Emergency Project.		
d. ☐	The project constitutes a feasibility or planning study.		
e. ☐	The project is categorically exempt.		
	Applicable Exemption Class:		
f. ☒	The project is statutorily exempt.		
	Applicable Exemption:		Class 1: Existing Facilities under the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.
g. ☐	The project is otherwise exempt on the following basis:		
h. ☐	The project involves another public agency which constitutes the Lead Agency.		
	Name of Lead Agency:		

Date: 12/12/25

Staff: John Sanatar

FILED

DEC 17 2025

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER
 BY: M.G. DEPUTY



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE
CASH RECEIPT
DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

Print

Signature

Save

RECEIPT NUMBER:

30-12/17/2025-0973

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (if applicable)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT		12/17/2025
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING	DOCUMENT NUMBER	
ORANGE COUNTY	202585001219	
PROJECT TITLE		

UPPER HUNT CLUB RESERVOIR-COMMUNICATION AND SOLAR EQUIPMENT UPGRADE

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT		(949) 285-5927
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE
26111 ANTONIO PARKWAY SUITE 100	RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA CA	ZIP CODE
		92688

PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)

☐ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☒ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) \$ 4,123.50 \$ _____
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) \$ 2,968.75 \$ _____
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW \$ 1,401.75 \$ _____

☒ Exempt from fee
☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)
☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)
☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) \$ 850.00 \$ _____
☐ County documentary handling fee \$ 50.00 \$ _____
☐ Other \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 0.00

SIGNATURE

X *Melissa Gomez*

AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

Melissa Gomez Deputy Clerk