

FILED

February 12, 2026

JENAVIVE HERRINGTON

COUNTY CLERK
LAKE COUNTYBy
Deputy clerk**COUNTY OF LAKE**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division
 Courthouse - 255 N. Forbes Street
 Lakeport, California 95453
 Telephone 707/263-2221 FAX 707/263-2225

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: County Clerk Office of Planning & Research
 County of Lake 1400 Tenth Street
 Lakeport, CA 95453 Sacramento, CA 95814-3044

FROM: Lake County Community Development Dept.
 255 North Forbes Street
 Lakeport, CA 95453

PROJECT TITLE: Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System (HOS) Pilot Program Lakebed
 Encroachment Permit)PL-25-311)

PROJECT LOCATION: Clearlake Oaks arm of Clear Lake. On-shore components would be
 located at Clearlake Oaks County Water District facility parcel (12525 E
 State Hwy 20, Clearlake Oaks APN 035-111-25)

BACKGROUND: Clear Lake has long suffered from environmental issues associated with mercury contamination, and harmful algal blooms (HABs). These conditions threaten aquatic life and the community's cultural, recreational, and economic activities. In support of the Blue-Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake (BRC), University of California Davis (UC Davis), Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) researchers have shown that low-oxygen (hypoxic) conditions in deeper waters are significant contributors to the development of HABs and potentially mercury bioaccumulation. Hypoxic conditions are created during periods of stratification (warm water on the lake surface cuts off oxygen re-supply to the lake's bottom). TERC has recommended implementation of a pilot program to address the HABs with remediation technology called Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System (HOS) in Oaks Arm of Clear Lake. The project is funded by several grants and funding sources, including the California Natural Resources Agency and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The pilot project in Oaks arm proposes to add dissolved oxygen to bottom waters (the hypolimnion). Oaks Arm was selected because it is the smallest arm of the lake, frequently impacted by HABs and affected by mercury contamination. This project is specifically intended to reduce nutrient-driven algae blooms and mercury bioaccumulation. The knowledge gained will allow the BRC to evaluate upscaling the technology application to the full lake.

The HOS system includes land and lake components. The land components include a liquid 15,000 gallon oxygen tank on a curbed concrete pad (25 x 25 ft), refill hose and splash pad, evaporator, controls, piping, and discharge manifold. Land components of the HOS will be installed at the Clearlake Oaks County Water District property adjacent to the lake. A pipeline will deliver the compressed oxygen gas along the District's pier paralleling the plant's intake pipes into the lake. The site would also include security fencing, lighting and solar panels to power the system.

The in-lake components include two pipelines of approximately 20,000 linear feet reaching from the pier around the west end of Rattlesnake Island and into the deepest part of Oaks Arm where the diffusion takes place. There are no pumps or moving parts, and the only power use is for the control system.

Construction is anticipated to occur during the period February-May 2027. Operation is planned for May-November 2027. UC Davis will request temporary use of space in the County Park across the street from the water treatment plant for stockpiling materials. The land components will be constructed within the water treatment plant property, on previously disturbed land. There will be no shoreline excavation or construction. The onshore pipeline will likely run from the storage tank along the sea wall to the District's pier, and along the pier parallel to the water plant's intake pipe into the lake. The excavation for footings and foundations are not expected to extend beyond the existing fill material at the plant.

The in-lake components will be assembled along the beach and the County Park between the water treatment plant property and the park pier. The in-lake supply lines include a pair of HDPE plastic pipes. The pipe will be assembled in sections and floated from the beach into the lake until the entire pipeline is assembled and ready to float by boat into position in the lake. The in-lake pipeline will be connected to the pipeline at the water treatment plant pier, avoiding any construction impacts to the lake shore. The in-lake pipeline will then be sunk to the bottom.

The in-lake pipeline will be anchored with approximately 2,000 concrete blocks, weighing about 120 pounds each, typically spaced about 15 feet apart. The concrete anchors for the in-lake pipeline will rest on the top of the lakebed, with the diffuser line suspended about 1-3 feet above the lakebed during operation, which avoids disturbing the lakebed sediments. The buoyancy pipes are used for deployment and retrieval (for repairs or removal) of the entire pipeline.

Operation. The project is a short-term research project intended to complete in one season, or possibly two seasons depending on weather conditions that would impact installation and monitoring. The oxygen for the pilot project will be supplied as liquid oxygen delivered by tanker truck approximately 2 or 3 times per week during the operational months. The HOS design is largely self-cleaning, and the whole system needs only to be floated to the surface for repairs in the unlikely event of a line break. Hazard buoys will be deployed with one near the beginning of in-lake piping, and two more at the start and end of the area of diffuser lines where the lines are suspended. Hazard buoys will include a QR links to information about the HOS and may be fitted with a light for visibility to boaters in low light hours.

The pilot program would evaluate the effectiveness of increased dissolved oxygen (DO) near the lakebed as a strategy to mitigate HABs, mercury contamination and other water quality issues. The project is funded and scheduled for all equipment to be removed, leaving behind the concrete pads for future use, if the County chooses to pursue installation of permanent system in the future.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Lake County Community Development Department and Lake County Water Resources Department

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: UC Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC)

EXEMPT STATUS (Check One):

- Ministerial [Section 21080(b); 15268];
- Declared Emergency [Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)];
- Emergency Project [Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)];
- Statutory Exemption: State code number: _____;
- Categorical Exemption: 15306 (Information Collection); 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment); 15303 (New Small Facilities and Equipment), 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land).
- General Rule [Section 15061(b)(3)]

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The project qualifies for Categorical Exemption under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15306 (Information Collection) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), as the project includes a pilot program for research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. In this instance, the project is intended to treat the harmful algae blooms in Clear Lake, in turn improving conditions for fish and aquatic plant species. Related to the construction, Sections 15303 (New Small Facilities and Equipment), and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) are applicable. 15303 includes the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; and 15304 includes minor alterations to land including minor grading, trenching and backfilling.

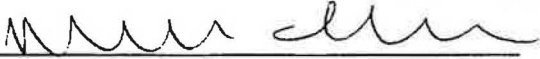
A site visit conducted by County Water Resources Department personnel confirmed that no tules are present. Additionally, a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement will be obtained from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and work would be conducted within the Clearlake 'hitch window' (October 15-December 31), unless otherwise approved by CDFW. No special status species occurrences are noted within the area of disturbance on the CDFW California Natural Diversify Database (CNDDDB). Lastly, the County is unaware of any significant tribal cultural resources on-site, and included the local Native American Tribes on the review of this project to provide any relevant information related to such resources; no such information was provided. Regardless, the applicant this noted that an archeological consultant will be contracted for monitoring of project construction.

According to the application, contractors will implement typical Best Management Practices (BMPs) for construction activities, such as dust control and day shift hours of operation. The installed equipment does not generate noise. Utilizing the existing pier at the water plant avoids any lakeshore excavation or construction. The in-lake pipeline is installed with anchors that rest on the lakebed surface and the gentle flow of bubbles from the diffuser does not disturb the sediment.

In accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Section 15300.2, there would be no cumulative impacts related to the project; there are no known unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment; the project would not be located within an officially designated state highway; no trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings would be removed or

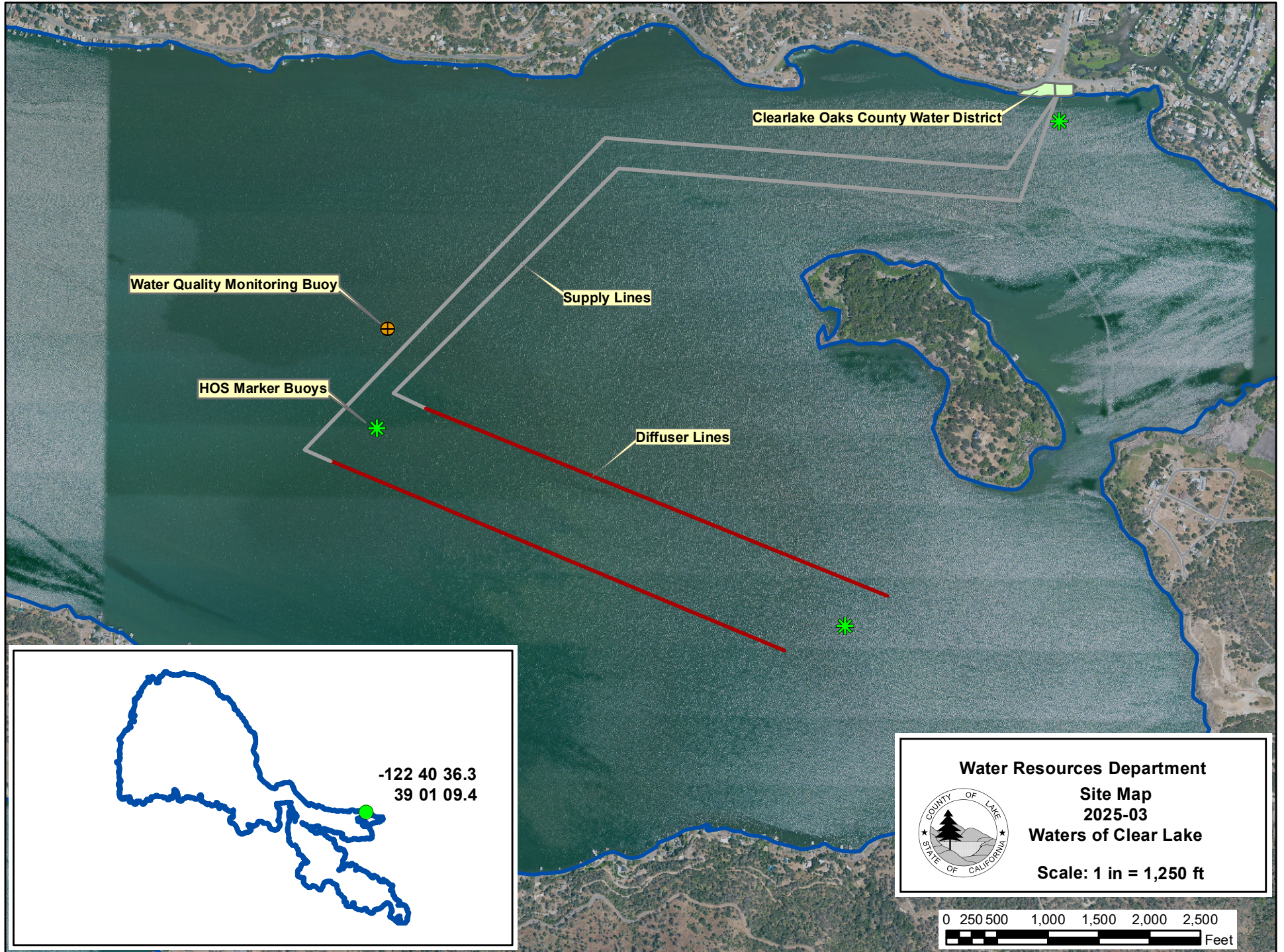
damaged; and there are no hazardous waste sites within 1,000 feet of the project site. The County is unaware of any significant tribal cultural resources on-site, but has included the local Native American Tribes during the application process to provide any relevant information related to such resources; no information related to the project impacting such resources has been received. Based on the aforementioned, the Lake County Community Development Department has determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment and is, therefore, exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CONTACT PERSON: Michelle Irace TELEPHONE NUMBER: 707-263-2221

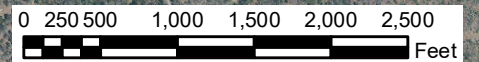
Signature:  **Date: February 12, 2026**

Title: Senior Planner

EXHIBIT A



Water Resources Department
Site Map
2025-03
Waters of Clear Lake
Scale: 1 in = 1,250 ft



Site access note: Visiting UCD staff and consultants will check in at the plant office for access. LOX filling will take place without entering the plant.

LOX tank. 15kg. 14' diameter, 15' tall
Project Civil Engineer to confirm pad location to avoid surcharge load on sheet pile wall

LOX DELIVERY TANKER

concrete splash pad

LOX fill port mounted in fence

FUTURE PLANT EXPANSION AREA 2026

Pipe attached to sea wall

Distribution manifold with valves

Pipe out to lake on or under pier

Concrete pad, 16' x 16'

Fig 3. Clearlake Oaks County Water District site map with the potential location of the LOx tank and the concrete pad marked in blue