

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

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

From: California Department of Water Resources
San Luis Field Division, 31770 Gonzaga Road
Gustine, CA 95322-9737

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources

Project Title: California Aqueduct Reach 3 and Reach 4 Vegetation, Trash, and Burrow Removal

Project Location City & County: Merced County and Fresno County

Project Location – Specific: Work will take place in portions of California Aqueduct (Aqueduct) Reach 3 and Reach 4. The work will be in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) right of way on the right side (R) of the Aqueduct from mileposts (MP) 82.50R to MP 83.00R, MP 97.00R to MP 97.20R, and MP 97.40R to MP 99.00R, and on the left side (L) of the Aqueduct from MP 70.82L to MP 71.84L, MP 76.78L to MP 79.53L, MP 81.50L to MP 83.90L, and MP 96.90L to MP 97.00L. The northernmost work area (MP 70.82L) is at the intersection of the Aqueduct and State Route 33; the southernmost work area (MP 99.00R), is about 1.55 miles northwest of the intersection of the Aqueduct and West Shields Avenue.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Under the direction of DWR's San Luis Field Division (SLFD), a crew from the California Conservation Corps (CCC) will use hand tools to remove vegetation and trash from the DWR right of way. Removed vegetation and woody debris will be chipped and scattered on DWR's road shoulders, or will be piled and burned according to conditions in SLFD's burn permits. Stumps left in the ground will be treated with herbicide to prevent future growth. Trash will be disposed of at an appropriate offsite location. Burrows will be evaluated by a qualified DWR biologist; burrows not being used, and not potentially being used, by sensitive species will be collapsed and compacted using hand tools. Listed species will not be impacted. This work is necessary to maintain the structural integrity of the Aqueduct. The State Water Project will benefit.

Exempt/Suspend Status:

- Ministerial (§21080[b][1]; 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Proclamation of a State of Emergency Due to Drought)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080[b][4]; California Code of Regulations §15269[c])
- Categorical Exemption: 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land)
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: Work consists of removing vegetation and trash, and collapsing burrows in portions of the DWR right of way. No healthy, mature, scenic trees will be removed and there will be no expansion of existing or former use of the Aqueduct right of way. Categorical Exemptions 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) apply.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Water Resources

Contact Person: Cody Nelson

Telephone: (209) 827-5190

Signature: Cody Nelson **Date:** 2/17/2026 **Title:** Planner/Scheduler/UC Supv.

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant