County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

INITIAL STUDY
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

1. **Project title:**

   Initial Study No. 8733 and Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3827

2. **Lead agency name and address:**

   Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
   Development Services and Capital Projects Division
   2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor
   Fresno, CA 93721-2104

3. **Contact person and phone number:**

   Arianna Brown, Planner, (559) 600-4245

4. **Project location:**

   The subject parcel is located on the south side of W. Harlan Ave. approximately one-third of a mile east from the intersection with S. Derrick Ave., and approximately 15 miles southwest from the City of San Joaquin (32581 W. Harlan) (045-080-43S) (Sup. Dist 4).

5. **Project sponsor's name and address:**

   Dirk Poeshel
   Dirk Poeschel Land Development Services, LLC
   923 Van Ness, Suite 200
   Fresno, CA 93711

6. **General Plan designation:**

   AE-40 (Exclusive Agricultural, 40-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

7. **Zoning:**

   AE-40 (Exclusive Agricultural, 40-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

8. **Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including, but not limited to, later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)**

   Allow the expansion of an existing almond processing facility by raising the annual processing capacity from 360,000,000 lbs. to 405,000,000 lbs. per year.

9. **Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:**

   The project site is surrounded by agricultural production and orchards.

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)**

None

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Letters sent via Certified Mail on August 5, 2025 to four Tribes:

Dumna Wo Wah Tribal Government, 2191 W. Pico Avenue Fresno, CA 93705
Table Mountain Rancheria, PO Box 410 Friant, CA 93626
Picayune Rancheria of the Chuckchansi Indians, PO Box 2226 Oakhurst, CA 93644
Sana Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe, PO Box 8 Lemoore, CA 93245

No correspondence was received from the Tribes prior to IS submittal.

NOTE: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code Section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- ☐ Aesthetics
- ☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- ☐ Air Quality
- ☐ Biological Resources
- ☐ Cultural Resources
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Geology/Soils
- ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality
- ☐ Land Use/Planning
- ☐ Mineral Resources
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Population/Housing
- ☐ Public Services
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
- ☐ Utilities/Service Systems
- ☐ Wildfire
- ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION OF REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☒ I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment. **A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED**.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the Mitigation Measures described on the attached sheet have been added to the project. **A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED.**

☐ I find the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required

☐ I find that as a result of the proposed project, no new effects could occur, or new Mitigation Measures would be required that have not been addressed within the scope of a previous Environmental Impact Report.

PERFORMED BY:

Arianna Brown, Planner

Date: 2/25/2026

REVIEWED BY:

Tawanda Mtunga, Principal Planner

Date: 2-25-2026

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INITIAL STUDY
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM
(Initial Study No. 8733 and Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3827)

The following checklist is used to determine if the proposed project could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. Explanations and information regarding each question follow the checklist.

1 = No Impact

2 = Less Than Significant Impact

3 = Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

4 = Potentially Significant Impact

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

1 a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

1 b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

1 c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

1 d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

1 a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

1 b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

1 c) Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production?

1 d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

1 e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

1 a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan?

2 b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

2 c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

2 d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

1 a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

1 b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

1 c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally-protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

1 d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

1 e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

1 f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

1 a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

1 b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

1 c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

1 a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?

1 b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

1 i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?

1 ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

1 iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

1 iv) Landslides?

1 b) Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?

1 c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

1 d) Be located on expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

1 e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

1 f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

2 a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

1 b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

1 a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

1 b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

1 c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

1 d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

1 e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

1 f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

1 g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

1 a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

1 b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

1 c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?

1 i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site;

1 ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site;

1 iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

1 iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

1 d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

1 e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

1 a) Physically divide an established community?

1 b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

1 a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

1 b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan?

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

2 a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

2 b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

1 c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, exposing people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

1 a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and

businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

1 b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

1 a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

1 i) Fire protection?

1 ii) Police protection?

1 iii) Schools?

1 iv) Parks?

1 v) Other public facilities?

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

1 a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

1 b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

1 a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

1 b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

1 c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

1 d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

1 a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

1 i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

1 ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

1 a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

1 b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

1 c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

2 d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

2 e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

1 a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

1 b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

1 c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

1 d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

1 a) Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

1 b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

1 c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Documents Referenced:

This Initial Study is referenced by the documents listed below. These documents are available for public review at the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services and Capital Projects Division, 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, Fresno, California (corner of M & Tulare Streets).

Fresno County General Plan, Policy Document
Fresno County Zoning Ordinance
Important Farmland 2022 Map, State Department of Conservation
2024 Fresno County General Plan Background Report
2025 Fresno County Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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