

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

February 17, 2026

Project Name: Approval of Funding Agreement to the Third District of Riverside Unincorporated Communities Initiative for the Deluz/La Cresta Communities Heli-Hydrant Project

Project Number: MT29759

Project Location: Unincorporated communities of De Luz and La Cresta

Description of Project: On November 17, 2020, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Executive Office to implement the Unincorporated Communities Initiative (UCI). The UCI is a focused, ongoing, and coordinated effort to improve infrastructure and service delivery for residents of unincorporated communities, with an emphasis on Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs). The program is funded through the Unincorporated Communities Fund (UCF), which receives authorized General Fund/Net County Cost (NCC) allocations through the County's annual budget and quarterly budget revision processes.

On December 15, 2020, the Executive Office presented a proposed framework for the planning and implementation of the UCI. With Board support, the Executive Office established a cross-departmental team of staff and department heads to facilitate program implementation. Through March 31, 2021, the UCI team conducted 15 community meetings and administered online surveys to assess community needs related to services, infrastructure, and infrastructure maintenance. On May 25, 2021, the UCI team presented the resulting needs assessment to the Board.

On June 24, 2025, the Board adopted the FY 2025–26 Budget, which included an allocation of \$12,500,000 in NCC General Funds to the UCF. These funds were divided evenly among the five Supervisorial Districts for use within each Supervisor's unincorporated communities.

On October 7, 2025, the Board approved the Third District Unincorporated Communities Initiative project and directed the Executive Office to transfer \$500,000 from the UCI to the Rancho California Water District (RCWD) to support project funding. This item approves the funding agreement, which establishes the terms and conditions governing the use of funds by both the County and RCWD. The funding agreement is identified as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Riverside County


Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Facilities Management

Exempt Status: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption. Codified under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Article 5, Section 15061.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of the categorical exemption as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The project will not cause an impact to an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern nor would the project involve unusual circumstances that could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. The project would not result in impacts to scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, historic resources, or other sensitive natural environments, or have a cumulative effect to the environment. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to occur with the UCI Funding Agreement with RCWD.

Section 15061 (b) (3) – “Common Sense” Exemption: In accordance with CEQA, the use of the Common Sense Exemption is based on the “general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) (3). The use of this exemption is appropriate if “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.” *Ibid.* This determination is an issue of fact and if sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity cannot have a significant effect on the environment, then the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68. The ruling in this case stated that if a project falls within a category exempt by administrative regulation or 'it can be seen with certainty that the activity in question will not have a significant effect on the environment', no further agency evaluation is required. With certainty, there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The approval of the UCI Funding Agreement is an administrative function and would not result in direct effects. No reasonably foreseeable indirect effects of the funding would occur. The Funding Agreement does not authorize physical development of the underlying property. Such development, if it were to occur, would be the result of future discretionary actions subject to CEQA review by RCWD prior to construction. Therefore, in no way, would the project as proposed have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact and the project is exempt from further CEQA analysis.

Therefore, the County of Riverside hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the project as proposed is exempt under CEQA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.

Signed:  **Date:** 2-17-2026
Mike Sullivan, Facilities Management
County of Riverside