

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: County Clerk of San Diego  
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 260  
P.O. Box 121750  
San Diego, CA 92112-1750

From: Vista Irrigation District  
1391 Engineer Street  
Vista, CA 92081-8836

Project Title: Lake Henshaw Oxygenation Pilot Study

Project Location - Specific: The proposed project is located on the western shore of Lake Henshaw on land owned by the Vista Irrigation District, located off California State Highway 76 in an unincorporated area of San Diego County, west of the community of Warner Springs, California. The lake is within the Mesa Grande quadrangle of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic map, at approximately 2,650 to 2,800 feet above sea level.

Project Location - City: Not applicable

Project Location - County: San Diego

Description of Project: The Lake Henshaw Oxygenation Pilot Study involves the design, construction, implementation, and analysis of a full-scale, temporary oxygenation system to evaluate the effectiveness of oxygenation in controlling harmful algal blooms (HABs) and improving water quality in Lake Henshaw. Commissioning, installation, and startup of the oxygenation system is planned from November 1, 2026 to April 1, 2027. The oxygenation system is expected to be decommissioned no later than December 31, 2027.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Vista Irrigation District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Vista Irrigation 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:** State CEQA Guidelines:

- Class 1 section 15301 (Existing Facilities), 14 CCR § 15301;
- Class 3 section 15303 (New Small Facilities and Equipment), 14 CCR § 15303
- Class 4 section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), 14 CCR § 15304;
- Class 6 section 15306 (Information Collection), 14 CCR § 15306;
- Class 7 section 15307 (Actions to Protect Natural Resources), 14 CCR § 15307; and
- Class 11 section 15311 (Accessory Structures), 14 CCR § 15311

Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt: The proposed project is a temporary pilot study that is exempt because it consists of maintenance, permitting, and minor alternations to an existing water supply reservoir, Lake Henshaw, with no expansion of existing or former use. Further, the pilot study will involve installation of limited new pieces of equipment and structures that will have negligible or no impacts on the environment and that will require no changes to existing facilities. Any alternations to land, water, and vegetation will be minor and temporary and will have negligible or no impacts to the environment. The pilot study involves basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities intended to inform further agency decision-making and will not result in serious or major disturbance to environmental resources. The purpose of the pilot study is to maintain, restore, and enhance the Lake Henshaw natural resource by exploring methods to reduce harmful algal blooms in the lake that can threaten local species, water quality, and drinking water supplies, and was selected to avoid the use of more environmentally harmful algaecides. Finally, the pilot study will install temporary minor structures that are accessory to the existing Lake Henshaw industrial and institutional facilities, and which will have negligible or no impacts on the environment. None of the exceptions listed in section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines would apply to the proposed study.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Lesley Dobalian

Telephone/Extension: (760) 597-3112

**The Board of Directors approved the above described project on April 15, 2026, and found that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, as amended.**

If filed by applicant: Not applicable

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Submission of this form is optional. Local agencies may file this form with the County Clerk pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). The filing of the notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to the approval of the project under Public Resources Code Section 21167(d). Failure to file the notice results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 4/21/2026

**Title:** Director of Water Resources