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State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY MERCED COUNTY COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE 06/17/2026
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING MERCED COUNTY	DOCUMENT NUMBER 2026-EIR-073	
PROJECT TITLE DOUBLE DIAMOND DAIRY EXPANSION PROJECT PERMIT #CUP25-007		

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME MERCED COUNTY COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER (209) 385-7686
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS 2222 M ST	CITY MERCED	STATE CA
		ZIP CODE 95340

PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)

☒ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) \$ 4,227.50 \$ _____
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) \$ 3,043.75 \$ _____
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW \$ 1,437.25 \$ _____

☒ Exempt from fee

☒ Notice of *Reparation*
☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☒ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) \$ 850.00 \$ _____
☒ County documentary handling fee \$ 50.00 \$ _____
☐ Other \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 0.00

SIGNATURE X <i>Ralph Williams</i>	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE Ralph Williams Deputy Clerk
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**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

2026-EIR-073

To: Interested Persons

From: County of Merced
Department of Community and Economic Development
2222 "M" Street
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 385-7686

FILED

June 17, 2026

**MATT H. MAY
COUNTY CLERK**

Contact: Mark Hamilton, Planner IIII

By Ralph W. Lin
Deputy Clerk

**Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report
Double Diamond Dairy Expansion project (Conditional Use Permit No.
CUP25-007)**

Merced County is the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Double Diamond Dairy Expansion project. Merced County will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed dairy expansion project as described in the attached Initial Study. We need to know the views of interested persons, agencies, and organizations as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Agencies should comment only on the environmental resources that are within the agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The description, location, and the probable environmental effects of the proposed dairy expansion project are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study and all project related documents can be obtained at the Community and Economic Development Department, 2222 'M' Street, Merced, CA 95340. This information is also available for download from the Merced County Planning Department website at:

<https://www.countyofmerced.com/414/Environmental-Documents>

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Mark Hamilton, Planner III, at the Merced County address shown above. If an organization or agency, please include the name of a contact person so that we have the ability to contact you further during the EIR preparation process.

Project Title: Double Diamond Dairy

Project Applicant: Double Diamond Dairy
505 E. Washington Road
El Nido, CA 95317

Project Location: 505 E. Washington Road, El Nido, CA 95317

Date: 06/17/2026

Signature: Mark E. Hamilton
Mark Hamilton, Planner

CC: State Clearinghouse

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
 For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH #

Project Title: Double Diamond Dairy Expansion Project

Lead Agency: County of Merced

Contact Person: Mark Hamilton

Mailing Address: 2222 "M" Street

Phone: (209) 385-7654 ext. 4419

City: Merced

Zip: 95340

County: Merced

Project Location: County: Merced City/Nearest Community: El Nido

Cross Streets: East Washington Road, State Highway 59

Zip Code: 95317

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): 37 ° 06 ' 43 " N / 120 ° 29 ' 01 " W Total Acres: 188

Assessor's Parcel No.: 075-074-001

Section: 31

Twp.: 9 South

Range: 14 East

Base: Mount Diablo Principal

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: 59

Waterways:

Airports: n/a

Railways: n/a

Schools: El Nido Elementary School

Document Type:

CEQA: ☒ NOP
☐ Early Cons
☐ Neg Dec
☐ Mit Neg Dec

☐ Draft EIR
☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR
 (Prior SCH No.) _____
 Other: _____

NEPA: ☐ NOI
☐ EA
☐ Draft EIS
☐ FONSI

Other: ☐ Joint Document
☐ Final Document
☐ Other: _____

Local Action Type:

☐ General Plan Update
☐ General Plan Amendment
☐ General Plan Element
☐ Community Plan

☐ Specific Plan
☐ Master Plan
☐ Planned Unit Development
☐ Site Plan

☐ Rezone
☐ Prezone
☒ Use Permit
☐ Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)

☐ Annexation
☐ Redevelopment
☐ Coastal Permit
☐ Other: _____

Development Type:☐ Residential: Units _____ Acres _____☐ Office: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____☐ Commercial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____☐ Industrial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____☐ Educational: _____☐ Recreational: _____☐ Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____☐ Transportation: Type _____☐ Mining: Mineral _____☐ Power: Type _____ MW _____☐ Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____☐ Hazardous Waste: Type _____☐ Other: Dairy - herd increase from 9,870 to 15,430**Project Issues Discussed in Document:**

☒ Aesthetic/Visual
☒ Agricultural Land
☒ Air Quality
☒ Archeological/Historical
☒ Biological Resources
☐ Coastal Zone
☒ Drainage/Absorption
☐ Economic/Jobs

☐ Fiscal
☒ Flood Plain/Flooding
☒ Forest Land/Fire Hazard
☒ Geologic/Seismic
☒ Minerals
☒ Noise
☒ Population/Housing Balance
☒ Public Services/Facilities

☒ Recreation/Parks
☒ Schools/Universities
☒ Septic Systems
☒ Sewer Capacity
☒ Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading
☒ Solid Waste
☒ Toxic/Hazardous
☒ Traffic/Circulation

☒ Vegetation
☒ Water Quality
☒ Water Supply/Groundwater
☒ Wetland/Riparian
☐ Growth Inducement
☒ Land Use
☒ Cumulative Effects
☐ Other: _____

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

Agriculture / General Agricultural (A-1) / General Agricultural (A)

Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)

The Applicant requests Conditional Use Permit No. CUP25-007 to expand the existing Double Diamond Dairy on an approximately 188 acre site in unincorporated Merced County. The project would allow construction of new dairy facilities, including free stall barns, a maternity barn, and a milking parlor, to support an increase in herd size from about 9,870 to approximately 15,430 animals. The expansion would occur within the existing dairy footprint on previously disturbed land. Existing facilities and the on site waste management system, including lagoons, separators, and land application of wastewater and manure to about 1,990 acres of cropland, would continue to operate. Project implementation would allow continued and expanded dairy operations with minor increases in truck traffic and no proposed General Plan amendments, zoning changes, subdivisions, or new off site infrastructure.

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "X".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

☐ Air Resources Board
☐ Boating & Waterways, Department of
☐ California Emergency Management Agency
☐ California Highway Patrol
☒ Caltrans District # 10
☐ Caltrans Division of Aeronautics
☐ Caltrans Planning
☐ Central Valley Flood Protection Board
☐ Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy
☐ Coastal Commission
☐ Colorado River Board
☐ Conservation, Department of
☐ Corrections, Department of
☐ Delta Protection Commission
☐ Education, Department of
☐ Energy Commission
☒ Fish & Game Region # 4
☐ Food & Agriculture, Department of
☐ Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of
☐ General Services, Department of
☐ Health Services, Department of
☐ Housing & Community Development
☐ Native American Heritage Commission

☐ Office of Historic Preservation
☐ Office of Public School Construction
☐ Parks & Recreation, Department of
☐ Pesticide Regulation, Department of
☐ Public Utilities Commission
☒ Regional WQCB # 5
☐ Resources Agency
☐ Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of
☐ S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.
☐ San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy
☐ San Joaquin River Conservancy
☐ Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy
☐ State Lands Commission
☐ SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
☐ SWRCB: Water Quality
☐ SWRCB: Water Rights
☐ Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
☐ Toxic Substances Control, Department of
☐ Water Resources, Department of

☐ Other: _____
☐ Other: _____

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date June 18, 2026 Ending Date July 20, 2026

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: SWCA Environmental Consultants
Address: 4111 Broad Street, Suite 210
City/State/Zip: San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact: Brandi Cummings
Phone: 805-543-7095

Applicant: Double Diamond Dairy
Address: 505 E Washington Road
City/State/Zip: El Nido, California 95317
Phone: (209) 722-8505

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: Mark E. Hamilton Date: 06/17/2026

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: _____

Project Title: Double Diamond Dairy Expansion Project

Lead Agency: County of Merced

Contact Name: Mark Hamilton *MH*

Email: Mark.Hamilton@countyofmerced.com

Phone Number: (209) 385-7654 ext. 4419

Project Location: Merced County

City

County

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The Applicant proposes approval of Conditional Use Permit No. CUP25-007 to expand the existing Double Diamond Dairy on an approximately 188 acre site in unincorporated Merced County. The project would allow construction of new dairy facilities, including free stall barns, a maternity barn, and a milking parlor, to support an increase in herd size from about 9,870 to approximately 15,430 animals. The expansion would occur within the existing dairy footprint on previously disturbed land. Existing facilities and the on site waste management system, including lagoons, separators, and land application of wastewater and manure to about 1,990 acres of cropland, would continue to operate. Project implementation would allow continued and expanded dairy operations with minor increases in truck traffic and no proposed General Plan amendments, zoning changes, subdivisions, or new off site infrastructure.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The proposed project could result in potentially significant impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, transportation, and noise. Increased herd size and facility expansion may generate additional air pollutants, odors, methane emissions, wastewater, truck traffic, and operational noise that could affect nearby receptors and contribute to regional cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures may include compliance with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District regulations, implementation of Best Management Practices and Best Performance Standards, continued operation of the anaerobic digester system, adherence to Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Waste Discharge Requirements and nutrient management practices, traffic management measures, and construction and operational noise controls. These issues will be evaluated in detail in the EIR, where additional mitigation may be identified.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

N/A - no known areas of public controversy.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

CVRWQCB
SWRCB
SJVAPCD

2 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

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 environmental resource area evaluations in this Initial Study.

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

Environmental Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and 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 revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measure based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Date: 06/17/2026

Signed:

Mark E. Hamilton

Initial Study for the Double Diamond
Dairy Expansion Project,
El Nido, Merced County, California

JUNE 2026

PREPARED FOR
County of Merced

PREPARED BY
SWCA Environmental Consultants

**INITIAL STUDY FOR THE
DOUBLE DIAMOND DAIRY EXPANSION PROJECT,
EL NIDO, MERCED COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Prepared for

County of Merced
2222 "M" Street
Merced, California 95340
Attn: Mark Hamilton, Planner III

Prepared by

SWCA Environmental Consultants
4111 Broad Street, Suite 210
San Luis Obispo, California 93401
(805) 543-7095
www.swca.com

SWCA Project No. 100261

June 2026

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MATT H. MAY
MERCED
County Clerk - Recorder
2222 M STREET
MERCED, CA 95340
(209) 385-7627

Public

Finalization No.: 202617234

Cashier: re20

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Date/Time: 06/17/2026 09:53 AM

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Transaction Time:	09:53 AM
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Transaction Fee:	No Fee
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Transaction Total:	No Fee
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Total Amount Due:	\$0.00
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Total Paid

No Fee

Amount Due:	\$0.00
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THANK YOU
PLEASE KEEP FOR REFERENCE