

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
Coachella Valley Water District
Post Office Box 1058
Coachella, California 92236

☒ County Clerk
County of Riverside
Post Office Box 751
Riverside, CA 92502

☐ County of Imperial
Imperial County Clerk/Recorder
940 West Main Street, Suite 202
El Centro, CA 92243

☒ State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
Post Office Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

☐ County of San Diego
Recorder/County Clerk's Office
1600 Pacific Highway, Suite 260
Post Office Box 121750
San Diego, CA 92112-1750

Project Title: Coachella Valley Water District – System Conservation Implementation Agreement - Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program 2027-2028

Project Location: CVWD Service Area, Riverside County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed action consists of CVWD extending a fallowing program for the System Conservation Implementation Agreement- Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program under which CVWD will enter into agreements with participating growers and the Bureau of Reclamation. CVWD's conservation participation will take place within the CVWD service area for Colorado River Water irrigation service area, which is located in the Eastern Coachella Valley, Eastern Riverside County. Under the program CVWD will compensate the participating growers in consideration for water that is conserved by the fallowing of the agricultural farmland with a history of irrigation. CVWD or other Colorado River contractors will not consumptively use the water conserved and will instead be made available by forbearance to assist in the management of reservoir levels in the Colorado River in the Lower Basin during current drought conditions. The program is intended to operate temporarily, conserving up to 10,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) in CVWD contributions in 2027 and 2028. CVWD on average provides approximately 245,000 AFY of Colorado River Water for agricultural irrigation. The program is not a long-term program intended to permanently change agricultural land use designations. The program initially began as a two-and-half year effort in 2024 through 2026. The extended program is anticipated to begin in January 2027 and end in December 2028. Participating growers will be responsible for any required weed control and dust control on the fallowed land and will agree not to change land maintenance and crop cultivation practices on other lands within CVWD to result in an increased consumptive use of water on those lands. Participants in the program will be prohibited from shifting water use to pumped groundwater while in the fallowing program.

Lead Agency Approving Project and Contact: Coachella Valley Water District; Robert Cheng, Assistant General Manager / Phone: (760) 398-2651

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION (Continued)
Coachella Valley Water District

Exempt Status:

- ☐ **Not a project:** State CEQA Guidelines §15378
- ☐ **Review for Exemption/Common Sense Exemption:** State CEQA Guideline §15061(b)(3)
- ☐ **Ministerial:** (Pub. Res. Code §21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guideline §15268)
- ☐ **Declared Emergency:** (Pub. Res. Code §21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guideline §15269(a))
- ☐ **Emergency Project:** 15269(b)
- ☒ **Statutory Exempt:** State CEQA Guidelines § 15277
- ☒ **Categorically Exempt:** State CEQA Guidelines: § 15301

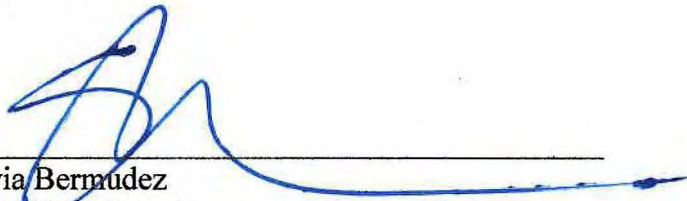
Reasons why project is exempt:

This program will not result in expansion of use of CVWD's existing irrigation distribution system or its irrigation drainage system. Accordingly, since the proposed program involves operation and implementation of CVWD's existing irrigation distribution facilities and irrigation drainage system facilities with no or negligible expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination, these actions qualify for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301).

Environmental impacts expected from the implementation of the *2007 Interim Guidelines For Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead (Guidelines)* were analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (refer to the following link: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/strategies/FEIS/index.html>). The proposed action of using conserved water from the proposed Conservation Program to assist in managing reservoir elevations is within the scope of analysis of actions that were previously analyzed in that EIS. Thus, to the extent the proposed actions involve or may affect areas outside of California, such as at Lake Mead or on the portions of the Colorado River in Nevada or Arizona, they are exempt from CEQA under a Statutory Exemption (Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(14) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15277). The proposed action of adopting the Coachella Valley Water District Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program for 2027 through 2028 is exempt under the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Environmental Contact Person: Carlos Huerta, CVWD Environmental Resources Analyst, Phone (760) 398-2651

Date: July 28, 2026



Sylvia Bermudez
Clerk of the Board

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

File: 0801.05