

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Appendix E

To: ☒ Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation/State Clearinghouse
CEQA Submit
ceqasubmit.lci.ca.gov

☒ County Clerk/County Recorder
County of Fresno
P.O. Box 766
Fresno, CA 93712

From: ☒ Westlands Water District
P.O. Box 6056
Fresno, CA 93703-6056

Project Title: Pilot Project for Golden Mussel Treatment at Laterals 4L and 7R and Budget Augmentation

Project Location – Specific: Westlands Water District water distribution system Laterals 4L and 7R located in an unincorporated area of western Fresno County, near the intersections of W. North Ave and S. Jerrold Ave. and W. Dinuba Ave. and S. Douglass Ave. alignments, respectively.

Project Location – City: Not Applicable

Project Location – County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Westlands Water District (District) proposes to implement a contract for application of a copper based molluscicide to the District's existing water infrastructure, specifically at lateral numbers 7R and 4L. The application is intended to eradicate and prevent immediate resettlement of the Golden Mussel on the treated pipeline infrastructure. Pursuant to a vendor agreement, the project would apply a properly registered molluscicide that is effective in the treatment of Golden Mussels and for use on raw water for agricultural and municipal use. Applications would start as soon as possible and continue through December of 2026, but may be stopped sooner if desired control is achieved. The project will require assessment of mussel mortality and regular water quality monitoring. The application is intended to mitigate and prevent further damage to the District's infrastructure, limit the spread of the Golden Mussel, and minimize threats to property, essential public services, and the environment. The project will also require a budget augmentation to fund Division 3 (Operations and Maintenance) expenses.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Westlands Water District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Westlands Water District

Exempt Status: (*check one*)

- ☐ Ministerial (Pub. Res. Code (PRC) § 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (PRC § 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines § 15269(a));
- ☒ Emergency Project (PRC § 21080(b)(2), (b)(4); CEQA Guidelines § 15269(b), (c))
- ☒ Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines §§ 15301, 15304, 15307, 15308)
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions (CEQA Guidelines § 15261)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(2) and (4) (Emergency Repairs / Emergency Projects) and CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.) sections 15269(b)&(c) (Emergency Repairs / Emergency Projects), 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities), 15304 (Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land, Water and/or Vegetation), 15307 (Class 7 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources), and 15308 (Class 8 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment). These exemptions apply because the pilot project is necessary to respond to an emergent, significant, and growing threat presented by the Golden Mussel to the District's water supply infrastructure and the District's ability to reliably deliver water to customers, and because project actions involve only the use of existing facilities, consist of minor alterations to water flowing through those facilities, and are taken to protect natural resources and the environment, including the District's distribution system, from damage by the invasive Golden Mussel.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Kelly Vandergon, P.E.

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 884-2523 ext. 107

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ YES ☐ NO

Signature:  Date: 2026.07.01 Title: Chief Administrative Officer☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☒ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108(b), 21152(b), Public Resources Code.