

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: _____

From: (Public Agency): Calif. Dept. of Water Resources
Northern Region Office
2440 Main St., Red Bluff, CA 96080

(Address)

Project Title: Statewide Monitoring Network Modernization Project: Black Mountain Soil Probe Installation

Project Applicant: California Department of Water Resources

Project Location - Specific:

Black Mountain Radar facility in Los Padres National Forest, approx. 14 miles east of Santa Margarita (35.394718, -120.352501)

Project Location - City: Santa Margarita Project Location - County: San Luis Obispo

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

DWR is proposing to install soil sensor probes within 50' of the existing Black Mountain hydrometeorological station. Installation of the soil probes would require the excavation of a 3' x 3' x 3' temporary soil pit where probes would be installed to collect soil moisture data. The soil probes would be connected to the existing station with buried cables in conduit. The soil pit and associated trenching would be excavated and backfilled with the use of hand tools. Chaparral vegetation up to 100' surrounding the station would also be removed to minimize the risk of wildfire.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Water Resources

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Water Resources

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: Sect. 15301, 5304, and 15306 (see below)
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Proposed soil probes would provide real-time data made publicly available through the California Data Exchange Center (CDEC) website, would not involve negligible expansion of existing use, and would result in temporary minor ground disturbance. Proposed activities will not result in a significant impact to the environment and none of the exceptions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. Proposed activities qualify for categorical exemptions 15301. Existing Facilities, 15304. Minor Alterations to Land, and 15306. Information Collection.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Brian Humphrey Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-317-8623

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: Brian Humphrey Date: 8/4/2026 Title: Sr. Environmental Scientist

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

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

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____