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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 San Luis Obispo

From: (Public Agency):
California Polytechnic State University
1 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Project Title: Cal Poly Pond/Reservoir Maintenance

Project Applicant: California State University, San Luis Obispo

Project Location - Specific: APN 076-341-019
Cal Poly campus off Via Carta Road and Stenner Creek Road (35.184633, -120.394180)

Project Location—City:

Project Location—County: San Luis Obispo

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
The project consists of routine maintenance and minor restoration at three existing campus agricultural water storage reservoirs: Indonesian Reservoir, Middlecamp Reservoir, and Drum Reservoir.

Over time, sediment accumulation and dense emergent vegetation growth, primarily bulrush, have reduced water storage capacity and water quality and impaired existing reservoir infrastructure. Vegetation and sediment have obstructed overflow intake structures, clogged pump intakes, contributed to pump burnouts, and hindered routine inspections and maintenance.

Project activities include selective removal of excess emergent vegetation and accumulated sediment; off-site transport and disposal of removed material at a licensed disposal facility; equipment staging for (refueling, stockpiling, and parking) outside aquatic resources, where feasible; and implementation of stormwater best management practices, including biodegradable straw wattles and native-species hydroseeding of disturbed banks.

All work will occur within the existing reservoir footprints and associated infrastructure and will be conducted from reservoir banks using excavators. The project will not expand reservoir capacity, modify reservoir boundaries, remove trees, create new facilities or roadways, alter existing land uses, or increase operational capacity beyond existing conditions. The project does not involve expansion or creation of waters of the state.

The reservoirs are existing managed water-storage facilities supporting campus agricultural pedagogy, including farms, gardens, and land laboratories used as living classrooms for hands-on, place-based learning. They also support campus flood-management resilience. Beneficiaries include campus students, faculty, agricultural programs, and the broader campus community.

These activities will restore water storage volume, improve water quality, and enhance the reservoirs' effectiveness for agricultural water supply and campus flood management. The reservoirs are also utilized by CAL FIRE for aerial wildfire-suppression support; by restoring reservoir function and reducing vegetation obstruction, the project will improve aerial access to available water resources.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California State University, San Luis Obispo

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Facilities Planning and Capital Projects

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:
Class 1—Existing Facilities: Sec. 15301; Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land: Sec. 15304

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☐ Statutory Exemptions: Common Sense Exemption: Sec. 15061(b)(3)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §15301 (Class 1—Existing Facilities). Class 1 applies to the operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. More specifically, §15301(h) expressly includes the maintenance of existing water supply reservoirs. The project is limited to maintenance of three existing, managed agricultural water-storage reservoirs and their associated intake and overflow infrastructure. It will restore existing operational function by removing accumulated sediment and excess emergent vegetation; it will not increase storage or operational capacity, expand reservoir boundaries, construct new facilities or access roads, or change existing land uses.

The project is also supported by State CEQA Guidelines §15304 (Class 4—Minor Alterations to Land), because the limited, localized vegetation management and bank restoration constitute minor alterations to land, water, and vegetation. To the extent sediment removal is characterized as maintenance dredging, §15304(g) may additionally apply, provided removed material is transported to a disposal location authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies.

The project has no potential for significant environmental effects because all work will occur within the existing reservoir footprints and associated infrastructure, using temporary equipment operated from the reservoir banks. The project avoids expansion into undeveloped areas and will not result in new impervious surface, new traffic-generating uses, increased water demand, increased operational noise, or growth-inducing effects. Construction-related effects, including equipment noise, dust, exhaust emissions, and vehicle trips, will be temporary, localized, and limited to the duration of maintenance activities.

Potential effects on water quality, erosion, and sedimentation will be avoided or minimized through implementation of stormwater best management practices, including biodegradable straw wattles and native-species hydroseeding of disturbed banks. Selective vegetation removal will be confined to excess emergent vegetation necessary to restore reservoir function; no trees will be removed. Removed material will be transported off site and disposed of at a licensed facility. The project will improve, rather than degrade, reservoir water quality, water-storage function, agricultural water supply, flood-management resilience, and access to water resources used by CAL FIRE for aerial wildfire-suppression support.

None of the exceptions to categorical exemptions set forth in State CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 applies. The project does not involve a cumulative expansion of reservoir use; is not located in a designated scenic highway corridor; does not involve a hazardous-waste site; does not cause substantial adverse change to a historical resource; and, based on the project's limited maintenance scope and avoidance measures, does not present unusual circumstances creating a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment.

Based on these findings, the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and is, therefore, exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Scott Bloom, Campus Planner	**Area Code/Telephone/Extension**: 805-756-5555

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: Scott M Bloom Date: 20260826 Title: Campus Planner

☒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: _____