State Water Resources Control Board

October 22, 2026

April Wentworth
Kern County
2700 M Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA, 93301

COMMENT LETTER ON THE KERN COUNTY (LEAD AGENCY), INITIAL STUDY / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT) FOR THE GURDIAL SINGH TRAVEL CENTER PROJECT BY LAV CONSULTING AND ENGINEERING (PROJECT); STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2026091259

Dear Ms. Wentworth:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Environmental Document for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (State Water Board, DDW) is responsible for regulating public water systems and issuing water supply permits pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

A public water system, as defined in the California Health and Safety Code (Health & Saf. Code) § 116275 subd. (h), is “a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year.” If a new public water system will be formed by the Project, an application must be submitted, and a permit must be obtained from the State Water Board, DDW before water can be provided for human consumption. “Human consumption” means the use of water for drinking, bathing or showering, hand washing, oral hygiene, or cooking, including, but not limited to, preparing food and washing dishes.” Health & Saf. Code § 116275 subd. (e).

Note, Health & Saf. Code § 116527 subd. (b) requires that any person submitting a permit application for a proposed new public water system must first submit a technical report to the State Water Board, DDW at least six months before initiating construction of any drinking system water-related improvements. The technical report must include an examination of the possibility of connecting to or being annexed by an existing adjacent community water system. Please see the attached What is a Public Water System flyer.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the Environmental Document:

- The Environmental Document indicates the Project will develop a 12,303-square foot travel center that will include a fast-food drive through and convenience store that sells food and drinks (PDF page 2). The Project will also include a separate restroom and shower area for long-haul truckers (PDF page 2). The travel center will have eight to 12 full-time employees per shift (PDF page 2). A well will be drilled for domestic water (PDF page 6). The Project will likely meet the definition of a public water system. If this is the case and no nearby municipal water systems agree to serve the Project, the applicant must submit a technical report to the State Water Board, DDW (Health and Saf. Code § 116527 subd. [b]) and apply to the State Water Board, DDW for a water supply permit. If connecting to the West Kern Water District is feasible, discuss this possibility in the Environmental Document.
- If a new public water system will be created by the Project:
    - Please consider the new and existing system components, including water storage, treatment, and fire flow, and the qualified staff required to operate the system.
    - Please consider the water demand for the Project in acre-feet per year during normal, dry, and multiple dry years and the anticipated amount of water that would be available in acre-feet per year during those years for the critically overdrafted basin.
    - Drinking water service lines and domestic supply wells shall be separated from sources of potential contamination (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, §§ 64572, 64560), such as leach fields. The project will construct an onsite wastewater treatment system and leach field (PDF page 6). Please consider how the well will be protected from contamination and if the regulations can be met or if a waiver or alternative to Waterworks Standards (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, § 64551.100) will be needed. If an alternative is needed, the water system will need to apply to the State Water Board, DDW.

If a new public water system will be formed, once the Environmental Document is adopted, please forward the following items in support of the new water system's permit application to Jeff Densmore of the State Water Board, DDW at Jeff.Densmore@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The Environmental Document, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), comment letters received, and the lead agency responses as appropriate.
- The Resolution or Board Minutes adopting the Environmental Document and MMRP and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz

Digitally signed by Lori Schmitz
Date: 2026.10.22 16:55:31 -07'00'

Water Boards

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Jeff Densmore
Supervising Water Resource Control Engineer
South Central Section

Adam Forbes
District Engineer
Visalia District

Colson Hertzog
District Engineer
Tehachapi District