MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

1. Name or description of project:	The proposed Project consists of Desert Water Agency's (DWA's) approval of an amended exchange agreement to facilitate the continued operation and maintenance of the Mission Creek Groundwater Replenishment Facility (MCGRF), including a potential increase in quantities of water delivered to the MCGRF for replenishment of groundwater in the Mission Creek Subbasin (MCSB). The amended exchange agreement would increase the annual State Water Project (SWP) Table A allocation, shared between DWA and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), from a total of 194,100 AF to a proposed 244,100 AF per year. The SWP Table A water is exchanged for a like amount of water from the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA). The increased allocation will potentially result in an increase in CRA water deliveries to the MCGRF of up to a theoretical maximum of 5,000 AF per year over a long-term average. The actual quantity of water delivered to the MCGRF in any given year will continue to vary depending on available SWP water and CRA water supplies and the applicable terms of the amended exchange agreement and be proportional to groundwater pumping in the MCSB per the DWA and CVWD water management agreement. The proposed Project will provide for ongoing management of the MCSB as a sustainable source of water supply for the Coachella Valley region. All Project activities would occur within the existing operational framework and physical footprint of the MCGRF and its existing facilities. The Project does not include any construction or installation of new facilities. A more detailed description of the Project is included in the Initial Study prepared for the Project, which is available for review at the location cited below.
2. Project Location – Identify street address and cross streets or attach a map showing project site (preferably a USGS 15' or 7 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name):	The Project is located adjacent to Mission Creek at Worsley Road (near the Colorado River Aqueduct, or CRA); in Section 21, Township 2 South, Range 4 East, San Bernardino Meridian, in the City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, California, as depicted on **Figures 1 through 3** included in the Project Initial Study. The Project facilities are surrounded by undeveloped desert landscape, approximately 0.5 mile east of State Route 62.
3. Entity or Person undertaking project:	
A. Entity	
(1) Name:	Desert Water Agency
(2) Address:	1200 S. Gene Autry Trail Palm Springs, CA 92264
B. Other (Private)	
(1) Name:	
(2) Address:	

The Lead Agency, having reviewed the Initial Study of this proposed project, having reviewed the written comments received prior to the public meeting of the Lead Agency, and having reviewed the recommendation of the Lead Agency's Staff, does hereby find and declare that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment. A brief statement of the reasons supporting the Lead Agency's findings are as follows:

The Project will not result in significant adverse impacts upon any threatened or endangered species of plants or animals, nor will it result in damage to or destruction of any significant examples of California history or prehistory. Potential impacts upon archaeological and historical resources, tribal cultural resources, and water quality will be avoided or reduced by adhering to the terms of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (see Exhibit A, attached, which is incorporated herein by reference) throughout ongoing operation and maintenance of the Project.

The Lead Agency hereby finds that the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects its independent judgment. A copy of the Initial Study may be viewed at the offices of Desert Water Agency at the address listed below.

The location and custodian of the documents and any other material which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the Lead Agency based its decision to adopt this Mitigated Negative Declaration are as follows:

Desert Water Agency
1200 South Gene Autry Trail
Palm Springs, CA 92264
(760) 323-4971

11/10/2026
Date

Kristin Bloomer
President, Board of Directors
DESERT WATER AGENCY

MISSION CREEK GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT FACILITY
MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

EXHIBIT A TO THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Section I – Introduction

Section 21081.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a mitigation monitoring program be prepared prior to the approval of any project which incorporates mitigation measures as a condition of approval. Mitigation measures are generally adopted to reduce the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of a project to a level that is less than significant. The mitigation monitoring program must ensure compliance with mitigation measures throughout all applicable phases of the project.

Since the project considered by the Initial Study for Desert Water Agency's Mission Creek Groundwater Replenishment Facility (Project) incorporates mitigation measures as a condition of approval, this Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program has been prepared and incorporated into the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project.

Section II – Historical, Archaeological, and Tribal Cultural Resources Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

As described in Issues V and XVIII of the Project Initial Study, the Project would not result in an adverse impact upon any known historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources (collectively, cultural resources); however, ground disturbance during ongoing maintenance activities could uncover previously-undiscovered cultural resources. This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is intended to avoid or reduce the potential impacts by the Project upon previously-undiscovered cultural resources that may be present in subsurface soils by specifying methods and procedures for avoiding or reducing such impacts.

The following mitigation measures (**CUL-1 through CUL-3**) will be implemented in order to ensure that the continued maintenance of the Mission Creek Groundwater Replenishment Facility (MCGRF) does not result in a significant adverse impact upon any previously-undiscovered cultural resources that may be uncovered during Project maintenance activities. Each measure is attended by a notation of the party responsible for its implementation and of the period for which it will be in effect.

CUL-1: Cultural Resources

If any historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resource is discovered during Project operation and maintenance activities, all activity in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot radius buffer area) shall cease, and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards in archaeology (Qualified Archaeologist) will be contracted to assess the find. Operation and maintenance activities may proceed outside of the buffer area during assessment of the find. If the find is determined to be potentially significant, the Qualified Archaeologist will develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan. If the find is a prehistoric or Native American resource, the Qualified Archaeologist will seek input from the appropriate Native American tribe(s) in development of the Monitoring and Treatment Plan. If the Qualified Archaeologist determines that data recovery is necessary, a Phase III Archaeological Data Recovery Plan will be developed and implemented.

Responsible Party: Desert Water Agency (DWA) General Manager
Implementation Period: During Maintenance Activities at the MCGRF

CUL-2: Vegetation Removal

At least three weeks prior to planting or vegetation removal beyond regular monthly maintenance, including any major plant removal, DWA will contact the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office (ACBCI-THPO) with a description of the work that will be performed, providing ACBCI-THPO an opportunity to assess the proposed work and potentially observe the associated ground disturbance.

Responsible Party: DWA General Manager
Implementation Period: Prior to and During Certain Maintenance Activities at the MCGRF

CUL-3: Human Remains

If any human remains, or what appear to be human remains, are uncovered or encountered at the MCGRF during facility operation or maintenance, DWA will immediately halt ground disturbance and will notify the Riverside County Coroner's Office via telephone at (760) 863-8311. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, DWA will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and will work with the NAHC and the Most Likely Descendent to determine the appropriate disposition of the remains. The Project will comply with California Health and Safety

Code §7050.5 and California Public Resources Code §5097.98, as applicable, throughout operation and maintenance of the MCGRF.

Responsible Party: DWA General Manager
Implementation Period: During Maintenance Activities at the MCGRF

Section III – Water Quality Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Monitoring and Report Program

As described in Issue X of the Project Initial Study, the Project consists of the continued operation and maintenance of the MCGRF, which is expected to contribute to gradual increases in salinity over time within the MCSB. This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is intended to avoid or reduce the potential impacts by the Project on salinity in the MCSB by specifying methods and procedures for avoiding or reducing such impacts.

The following mitigation measure (**WQ-1: Implementation of Salt and Nutrient Management and Groundwater Monitoring Requirements**) will be implemented to ensure that gradual increases in salinity in the MCSB will not adversely affect the beneficial uses of the groundwater. The measure is attended by a notation of the party responsible for its implementation and of the period for which it will be in effect.

Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Implementation of Salt and Nutrient Management and Groundwater Monitoring Requirements

Desert Water Agency (DWA) is a participating agency in the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin Salt and Nutrient Management Plan, dated June 2015 (2015 SNMP), which addresses salt and nutrient loading in the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, including the Mission Creek Subbasin (MCSB). DWA, together with the other participating Coachella Valley SNMP Agencies, is developing an updated SNMP. The SNMP is intended to prevent significant groundwater-quality impacts from salt and nutrient loading, including loading attributable to the Project, by establishing protective water-quality targets, monitoring requirements, and enforceable management measures that maintain compliance with applicable water-quality objectives and antidegradation requirements and protect designated beneficial uses of the MCSB. DWA shall continue its participation in that process, provide the data and funding required of DWA under the agencies' agreements, and adopt

and implement the portions of the updated SNMP applicable to DWA and the Project, subject to the requirements below.

A. Implementation of Existing Workplans. DWA shall implement the actions assigned to it under the *Workplan to Develop the Coachella Valley Salt and Nutrient Management Plan*, dated September 2, 2021 (SNMP Workplan), and the *Groundwater Monitoring Program Workplan, Coachella Valley Salt and Nutrient Management Plan*, dated December 23, 2020 (Monitoring Workplan), included in Appendices C and D of the Project Initial Study and incorporated herein by reference.

DWA shall complete its assigned monitoring-network improvements and implement its portion of the fully functioning monitoring program by March 31, 2027. These obligations shall include filling assigned monitoring gaps, sampling the designated wells, analyzing the constituents required by the Monitoring Workplan, and reporting the results of TDS levels.

B. Groundwater Monitoring and Reporting. DWA shall monitor groundwater in accordance with the locations, constituent suite, sampling frequencies, and procedures specified in the Monitoring Workplan. Monitoring shall include TDS, nitrate as nitrogen, major cations and anions, and total alkalinity. DWA shall sample its designated network wells at least once every three years, or more frequently where required by the Monitoring Workplan, an applicable regulatory requirement, or the Project-specific monitoring requirements established under the SNMP.

DWA shall submit, individually or through the CV-SNMP Agencies, the annual implementation progress report to the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). DWA shall make its annual compliance documentation publicly available.

C. Corrective Action and Continuing Compliance. DWA shall implement the management measures, operating limits, monitoring requirements, and early-action responses established under the applicable SNMP throughout the period in which Project-related loading may affect groundwater quality. Corrective actions may include reductions in the volume or constituent

loading of the Project activity responsible for the predicted or observed impact, including suspension where necessary to maintain compliance with the SNMP.

Upon detecting a potential violation, DWA shall implement the corresponding response outlined in the applicable SNMP. If monitoring or updated forecasting demonstrates that existing controls are insufficient to prevent a violation, DWA shall immediately reduce or suspend the contributing Project activity to the extent necessary to prevent further noncompliance, and implement additional controls necessary to bring the Project activity into compliance. DWA shall not resume or increase that activity until it is demonstrated that the revised controls will maintain compliance and any necessary regulatory approvals have been obtained.

Responsible Party: DWA General Manager
Implementation Period: Throughout Project Operation