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0925-92

CEQA
Transmittal Memorandum for 2025

RECEIVED
KERN COUNTY
SEP 09 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
AUDITOR CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
BY _____ DEPUTY

Attach **one** transmittal memorandum to the front of the original CEQA document. Clip copies in the back.
1) If notice requires F&W receipt, you must provide a minimum of 3 copies of the notice.
2) If notice does not require F&W receipt, you must provide a minimum of 2 copies of the notice.

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

LEAD AGENCY City of Ridgecrest

PROJECT TITLE New Wastewater Treatment Plant Modified Project Addendum

FILED
KERN COUNTY
SEP 09 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
AUDITOR CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
BY _____ DEPUTY

PROJECT APPLICANT City of Ridgecrest

PHONE NUMBER (760) 499-5000

PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS: 100 W. California St.

CITY Ridgecrest STATE CA ZIP CODE 93555

WORK ORDER # _____ ☒ 30-Day Posting ☐ 35-Day Posting ☐ 45-Day Posting ☐ Other _____

CONTACT PERSON Ron Strand PHONE NUMBER (760) 499-5001

CHECK DOCUMENT BEING FILED:

☐ Notice of Availability ..... No Fee

☐ Notice of Intent ..... No Fee

☐ Notice of Preparation ..... No Fee

☐ Notice of Public Hearing ..... No Fee

☐ Other _____ ..... No Fee

☒ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) $4123.50
- ☐ Previously paid F&W (**must attach F&W receipt**) F&W Receipt Number# _____
- ☐ DFG No Effect Determination (**F&W letter must be attached**) ..... No Fee
- ☐ County Administrative Fee $50.00

☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration $2968.75
- ☐ Previously paid F&W (**must attach F&W receipt**) F&W Receipt Number# _____
- ☐ DFG No Effect Determination (**F&W letter must be attached**) ..... No Fee
- ☐ County Administrative Fee $50.00

☐ Notice of Exemption ..... No Fee
- ☐ County Administrative Fee $50.00

TOTAL $ 4,123.50

*Additional copies to be returned to: _____
*Method of return: ☐ Hold for pick-up/Call # _____ ☐ Interoffice Mail

PAYMENT METHOD: ALL APPLICABLE FEES MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME OF FILING

☐ JV – Ledger Account _____ Cost Center _____ Fund _____ Spend Category _____
☐ Money Order
☐ Check

25948

Notice of Environmental Document
Posted by County Clerk on 09/09/2025
and for 30 days thereafter, Pursuant to
Section 21152(C), Public Resources Code

Print Form

RECEIVED WITH FEE
RECEIPT # 151516664

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:
- [■] Office of Planning and Research
  - U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
  - Street Address: 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113, Sacramento, CA 95814
- [■] County Clerk
  - County of: Kern
  - Address: 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301

From:
- Public Agency: City of Ridgecrest
- Address: 100 W. California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
- Contact: Ronald Strand, City Manager
- Phone: (760) 499-5000

Lead Agency (if different from above):
- Address:
- Contact:
- Phone:

FILED
KERN COUNTY
SEP 09 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK
BY _____ DEPUTY

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2015061095

Project Title: New Wastewater Treatment Plant Modified Project Addendum

Project Applicant: City of Ridgecrest

Project Location (include county): Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Kern County

Project Description:

See attached Project Description.

This is to advise that the City of Ridgecrest ([■] Lead Agency or [ ] Responsible Agency) has approved the above described project on 09/03/2025 (date) and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project.

1. The project [■ will ☐ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ■ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
   ☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures [■ were ☐ were not] made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [■ was ☐ was not] adopted for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [■ was ☐ was not] adopted for this project.
6. Findings [■ were ☐ were not] made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the final EIR with comments and responses and record of project approval, or the negative Declaration, is available to the General Public at:
City of Ridgecrest located at 100 W. California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Signature (Public Agency): _____ Title: City Manager

Date: 9-8-25 Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

25948

Notice of Environmental Document
Posted by County Clerk on 09/09/2025
and for 30 days thereafter, Pursuant to
Section 21152(C), Public Resources Code

Project Description

Project Title

New Wastewater Treatment Plan Modified Project

Project Location

The Project is located in Ridgecrest, California, approximately 115 miles northeast of Los Angeles and 80 miles east of Bakersfield. The Project site is located on Assessor's Parcel Numbers 033-030-02-00-5, 033-030-05-00-4, and 033-030-08-00-3. The centroid of the Project site is approximately 35° 40' 21.50" North 117° 38' 20.95" West.

General Plan Designation and Zoning

The Project is located on Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake. The site's General Plan Land Use within the City of Ridgecrest General Plan is Military (MIL). The site is also located within the Military Influence Area (MIA) overlay zone. Other than this overlay zone, the site does not hold an official zoning designation due to naval base occupancy. The Project is located inside the naval base, and all surrounding lands hold the same General Plan Land Use and zoning designation.

Description of Project

The City of Ridgecrest (City), located in the eastern portion of Kern County, desires to upgrade its current WWTP on land owned by the United States Department of the Navy (Navy) and would serve both the City of Ridgecrest and NAWS China Lake. As such, the Navy has served as a collaborator with the City in the production of this document. The Navy is also preparing a separate document in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Ridgecrest New WWTP Modified Project (Project) would be constructed adjacent to the existing WWTP, utilizing very little of the existing facility. The site is located on NAWS China Lake, approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the City center. The City has held an agreement with the Navy for an approximately 352-acre easement to operate a WWTP and 11 facultative treatment ponds on Navy-owned land since 1974, with the most recent modification of the contract on February 7, 1994. Two of these 11 ponds are out of service. In order to accommodate the expansion of the existing WWTP, the City requested, and was granted in 2020, an extension of the existing easement to include an additional 7.67 acres to the west of the existing WWTP. The Project would result in the construction of an upgraded WWTP to meet future residential and commercial growth through approximately 2050, repair existing treatment pond infrastructure, and improve the quality of the wastewater treated at the facility.

Existing Conditions

The existing WWTP has a permitted capacity of 3.6 million gallons per day (mgd), with a daily maximum discharge of 3.6 mgd. While the facility is rated for a maximum capacity of 3.6 mgd, the facility is aging and is not expected to be able to accommodate flows that would meet its permitted capacity In 1993 daily flow reached approximately 3.3 mgd; however, due to a decrease in population and implementation of water conservation in conformance with California and local policy, daily flow levels (as of 2020) have declined to

approximately 2 2 mgd. Additionally, in 2019 several earthquakes occurred which affected the area, causing damage to the distribution system of the 11 facultative treatment ponds located at the NAWS site.

Under current operations, treated water is percolated into the underlying aquifer through the treatment ponds located at the NAWS site and the former City WWTP site, located approximately 3.25 miles southeast of the Project site. Additionally, recycled water that has undergone primary and secondary treatment is used for irrigation at the China Lake Golf Course, approximately one-quarter mile southeast of the Project site. The Navy disinfects the effluent before it is used for irrigation purposes. Under the City's contract with the Navy to operate the WWTP, the Navy is allotted 525 acre-feet per year (AFY) of treated water, which is further treated within a sand filter prior to disinfection by the Navy and then used for irrigation purposes on the golf course.

Previous Analysis and Approval

A previous version of this Project was analyzed in an EIR that was certified by the City Council on July 6, 2016 (SCH No. 2015061095). The previous EIR analyzed two alternatives for the expansion of the City of Ridgecrest wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), from which the current Project differs. Alternative 1 proposed to demolish the existing WWTP and construct a new, upgraded facility on the same site, as described in Section 2.1.6, and also proposed the City to construct several new treatment ponds where the four percolation ponds currently exist in the southeastern portion of the City. Alternative 2 proposed the expansion of the treatment ponds at the NAWS China Lake site, the construction of an expanded gravity main pipeline, and the construction of a new WWTP south of the four existing percolation ponds in the southeastern portion of the City, along with several new treatment ponds at this site. Both of these alternatives proposed treatment ponds to be located within San Bernardino County, across the street from the nonoperational City WWTP.

Project Scope Change

Following certification of the EIR, the City and Navy continued to discuss the Project and eventually came to an agreement that the scope of the Project should change, deciding to upgrade the WWTP to be constructed adjacent to the existing facility. This would necessitate the removal of most of the existing facility. The upgrade and ultimate expansion of the existing facility would require the development of approximately 7.67 acres of land to the west of the current facility. This land has been added to the existing easement between the Navy and the City for construction of the improved WWTP. The Certified EIR analyzed a 3.6-mgd (average daily flow) wastewater facility, while the fully completed Project would construct a facility that can process up to 5.4 mgd (average daily flow). This was not previously analyzed in the Certified EIR. This Addendum analyzed processing up to 5.4-mgd but did not analyze disposal of this amount. Upon full buildout of the facility, it would only be able to dispose of up to 3.6 mgd (as this is what will be requested in the Report of Waste Discharge for the new plant). This Addendum only analyzes disposal of up to 3 6 mgd. Additionally, the proposed Project includes the future construction of pond 12. This pond is within the existing easement between the Navy and the City but was also not analyzed in the Certified EIR. The improvements would result in the construction of a new facility that would utilize primary clarifiers, extended aeration with activated sludge (oxidation ditches), secondary clarifiers to treat the wastewater, along with anaerobic digesters and cogeneration facilities to utilize the resulting biogas from the anaerobic digesters for power production. Further, the Project includes repairs to the existing infrastructure of the 11 treatment ponds that were damaged by earthquakes in 2019. While three other alternatives were presented in the EIR (not provided or discussed in this document), the current Project has been deemed the most appropriate and includes considerations such as cost, usability, maintenance, and lifespan of the equipment.

Removed Project Components

The proposed Project no longer includes the following components:

- Construction of several new treatment ponds where the four percolation ponds currently exist in the southeastern portion of the City.
- Irrigation of approximately 30 acres of alfalfa located 3.25 miles southeast of the Project site, at the former City WWTP.
- The construction of an expanded gravity main pipeline.
- The construction of a new WWTP south of the four existing percolation ponds in the southeastern portion of the City, along with several new treatment ponds at this site.

No construction will take place in San Bernardino County. All construction will now take place on the NAWS site through an easement that the Navy has granted to the City.

Mohave Tui Chub Population

The Mojave Tui Chub, an endangered fish species native to the Mojave River, was relocated to NAWS China Lake in the 1970s. Effluent from treatment ponds 9 and 10 are thought to have experienced seepage that may provide suitable habitat for the Tui Chub at the Lark Seep, approximately 4,500 feet to the northeast of treatment pond 10. While this has not been officially confirmed, this document assumes that Lark Seep is receiving subsurface flow from ponds 9 and 10. The relocation of these fish has been discussed between the Navy and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and may result in their removal at a later date, following completion of the Project. According to the 2002 *Draft Environmental Impact Statement For Proposed Military Operational Increases and Implementation of Associated Comprehensive Land Use and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans*, this population of fish is managed by NAWS in cooperation with the USFWS, CDFW, and City of Ridgecrest, and the water supply to the seep system is regularly monitored at established test wells and monitoring stations, to ensure compliance with water quality standards established for the protection and enhancement of the tui chub. The physical location of the Lark Seep is outside of the Project boundary and would not be disturbed as part of Project activities. The population will continue to be managed by USFWS, CDFW, and the Navy. The City of Ridgecrest is under contract per the easement agreement to provide 200 AFY of treated effluent to the Navy for their use in supporting the tui chub population.

Construction

The Project would be constructed in two phases. Most processes within the existing WWTP would remain in service until the new WWTP is completed unless they are in conflict with the proposed improvements. The anticipated improvements that would be constructed in both phases are contained below:

Phase 1:

- Removal of the existing sludge drying beds
- Removal of the existing sludge storage area
- Removal of the existing influent junction structure
- New maintenance building
- New office/lab/administrative building
- New vehicle storage building
- Influent junction structure
- Septage receiving station
- Headworks

- Influent lift station
- Grit chamber
- Grit classifier
- Influent flow distribution box
- Primary clarifiers
- Primary sludge pump station
- Scum pump station
- Site waste lift station
- Oxidation ditches
- Secondary flow distribution box
- Secondary clarifiers
- Effluent control structure
- Disinfection basin
- Chemical storage area
- Return activated sludge (RAS)/Waste Activated Sludge (WAS) pump station
- Sludge thickening
- Oil & grease receiving station
- Anaerobic digestors
- Biosolids dewatering area
- Biosolids drying beds
- Biosolids storage area
- Biogas conditioning and power generation area
- Electrical distribution and emergency generator
- Auxiliary buildings
- Construction of Pond 12

Phase 2(future expansion):

- New primary clarifier
- New oxidation Ditch
- New secondary clarifier
- New anaerobic digester
- Expansion of the biosolids drying bed area
- Expansion of the biosolids storage area

Construction of Phase 1 is projected to accommodate capacity through approximately 2041, based on growth indicators for the City. Under Phase 1, annual average daily flow would be 3.6 mgd, with an average day maximum month flow of 4.0 mgd. The further expansion of the facility under Phase 2 is estimated to provide sufficient capacity to serve City growth through approximately 2052. Phase 2 would result in an annual average daily flow capacity of 5.4 mgd, with an average day maximum month flow of 5.9 mgd. Phase 2 is not fully designed and would likely not be built out for many years. As a result, just as was explained in the Certified EIR, environmental impacts from Phase 2 would be too speculative to analyze at this time and will be evaluated under a separate environmental document once the Phase 2 parameters have been determined and that phase is being actively considered.

The Project would also provide repairs to the existing infrastructure of the 11 treatment ponds which were damaged by earthquakes in 2019. Repairs would include, but are not limited to, replacement of the existing

piping to the treatment ponds, the installation of flow distribution boxes for each pond, and the installation of staff gages for each pond. In order to provide for these repairs and installations, each pond would be taken offline and drained, resulting in the existing biosolids being solar dried and removed from each respective pond. Pond bottoms would be scarified to rehabilitate percolation rates to near native conditions, and any existing damage to pond berms would be repaired as a part of this effort. The repair of pond infrastructure is contained as a part of the Project and would be completed as part of Phase 1. Ponds 8, 9, and 11 would be lined in the process. By lining these ponds, it will allow them to be fully loaded even during a wet year with a minimal chance of effluent surfacing down gradient of the ponds. In the future, depending on capacity and need, the City may construct a twelfth pond (Pond 12) within the northern section of the existing easement, to the north of pond 9 and west of pond 10. The timeline for the construction of Pond 12 is unknown at this time but is included in Phase 1 and covered in this Addendum.

Construction activities would be limited to the Project site, confined by the easement agreement between the City and the Navy, and would involve demolition, grading, paving, building construction, and painting. Site access during construction would be via a driveway connecting to North Knox Road. Principal deliveries to the Project site would include construction equipment, concrete and asphalt materials, building materials, and any related hardware required to construct the upgraded WWTP. A construction schedule has yet to be determined; however, any potential schedule for both construction activities and the delivery of materials would be required to be reviewed and approved by the Navy. It is anticipated that Phase 1 construction would take approximately two years to complete, and Phase 2 would take approximately 18 months to complete.

Future Use of Recycled Water

Following completion of the Project, the City would continue to provide the Navy with secondary treated effluent. The Navy would continue to provide disinfection of the effluent. At this time, the use of recycled water elsewhere throughout the City or on the NAWS China Lake has not been proposed. The treatment ponds that are thought to be creating suitable habitat for the Mojave Tui Chub would be allowed to continue to seep and provide habitat at the Lark Seep until such a time that the population of this species is relocated as agreed upon by the Navy and CDFW. Any potential future use of the recycled wastewater would be subject to both State and federal permits and regulations governing the disposal of and use of treated wastewater.

Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance of the expanded WWTP would be performed by the City of Ridgecrest maintenance staff. It is anticipated that upon full Project buildout the City would need to increase staff by approximately 10 people.

State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife

2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE

CASH RECEIPT

DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

Print | StartOver | Save

RECEIPT NUMBER:
15 — 09092025 — 15151666

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER *(If applicable)*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
CITY OF RIDGECREST		9/9/2025
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING		**DOCUMENT NUMBER**
Kern		25948

PROJECT TITLE

NEW WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT MODIFIED PROJECT ADDENDUM

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL		PHONE NUMBER
CITY OF RIDGECREST			(760) 499-5000
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	**CITY**	**STATE**	**ZIP CODE**
100 W. CALIFORNIA ST	RIDGECREST	CA	93555

PROJECT APPLICANT *(Check appropriate box)*

☑ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☑ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	$4,123.50	$	4,123.50
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	$2,968.75	$	0.00
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	$1,401.75	$	0.00

☐ Exempt from fee

- ☐ Notice of Exemption (attach)
- ☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	$850.00	$	0.00
☑ County documentary handling fee		$	50.00
☐ Other		$	

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☑ Check ☐ Other **TOTAL RECEIVED** $ 4,123.50

SIGNATURE	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
X M. Cedeno	M. CEDENO, KERN COUNTY CLERK, FSS

ORIGINAL - PROJECT APPLICANT | COPY - CDFW/ASB | COPY - LEAD AGENCY | COPY - COUNTY CLERK | DFW 753.5a (Rev 01012025)