

EXPEDITED DRINKING WATER GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM – CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PLANNING EXEMPTION CERTIFICATION FORM

Applicants must complete this CEQA Planning Exemption Certification Form if the applicable environmental review of the proposed project under the CEQA has not been completed prior to entering into a Grant Agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board).

This certification form applies only to the Project's planning/design tasks. **A separate CEQA clearance will be required prior to the State Water Board's authorization of any construction activities, including the purchase of any land or equipment for which CEQA review is required.** See sections 7, 8.1, and 8.2 of the Expedited Drinking Water Grant (EDWG) Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines). Section 8.1 of the Guidelines provides, in part, as follows:

No construction may proceed unless and until the State Water Board completes its own CEQA findings if applicable, gives authorization to proceed with construction, and provides final budget approval. The State Water Board may enter into a grant agreement to begin funding planning/design activities for a project, but such an award will not constitute approval of the construction scope element of the grant agreement or be a guarantee of construction funding. **The State Water Board expressly withholds approval of any construction project or construction element of a project and the release of funds associated with that construction project or that construction element of a project pending completion of the CEQA process, including the State Water Board making its own findings under CEQA if applicable.** Any funds in the award or the grant agreement linked to the construction element of a project are for encumbrance purposes only and will be reviewed after the State Water Board makes any necessary CEQA findings. The appropriate environmental review under CEQA must be complete before the State Water Board determines whether to approve funding for construction of the project or for any site acquisition (purchase of land, etc.) associated with the project.

When the lead agency's CEQA review process is complete, the lead agency must file a CEQA [Notice of Determination or Notice of Exemption for the project with the County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research] State Clearinghouse.

1. Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____
Applicant Entity Type: _____
County: _____
Project Name: _____
Project Number: _____
CEQA Lead Agency: _____

2. Project Location (attach map, if applicable)

3. Project Description

4. Planning and Design Activities

Will the project planning/design require any ground disturbing activities?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

If yes, provide a description of the type of ground disturbing activities, to occur during the project planning phase, and where they will occur. Please note that this section is focused on the project's planning/design tasks only. Such ground-disturbing activities may include soil sampling, test wells installations, or borings needed to gather information. Specifically, this section should **not** include descriptions of ground-disturbing activities planned as part of construction, which should be detailed in subsequent CEQA documentation.

Also describe any potential for significant environmental impacts associated with the ground disturbing activities, including but not limited to impacts to critical or unique habitat, important farmland, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, scenic areas, archeological sites, floodplains, or hazardous waste and substance sites.

5. Certification

I certify to the best of my knowledge that the planning and design portion of the project, including any ground-disturbing activities described above, is exempt from CEQA consistent with the following CEQA Guidelines Sections:

- ☐ CEQA Guidelines, section 15262, for only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency has not approved.
- ☐ CEQA Guidelines, section 15306, for basic data collection, research, resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, and the Exceptions to the Categorical Exemptions identified in section 15300.2 do not apply.

The State Water Board will not disburse funds for any construction-related activities, or any ground-disturbing activities other than those described above, until the lead agency has:

- Completed all documentation required under CEQA for the proposed construction project or activities:
 - Prepared and filed a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse; or
 - Taken all required steps to prepare, circulate, and adopt/certify the required CEQA documents and filed a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse; and
- Obtained written environmental clearance from the State Water Board confirming that the State Water Board has made its own environmental findings and concurred that construction activities may proceed.

Name of Authorized Representative

Signature

Title

Date