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## State Water Resources Control Board

October 4, 2022

Mr. Dan Hayden and Ms. Lyn Hayden  
Rocking M Ranch

[REDACTED]

### APPROVAL OF GROUNDWATER LOCAL COOPERATIVE SOLUTION FOR ROCKING M RANCH

Dear Mr. Hayden and Ms. Hayden:

On June 21, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) readopted a regulation, with amendments, establishing drought emergency minimum flows in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 875-875.9) (Regulation). Under the Regulation, local cooperative solutions may be submitted by individuals or groups as alternative means of reducing water use. The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the proposed local cooperative solution and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with conditions. Additional details regarding the contents of the proposal and conditions are described below.

For overlying or adjudicated groundwater diversions for irrigated agriculture described in Regulation section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D), the Deputy Director for the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director) may approve a local cooperative solution where the proposal is based on a binding agreement, and it reduces water use in the Scott River watershed by 30 percent compared to 2020 or 2021 during the total irrigation season (April 1 – October 31), and specifically includes a 30 percent monthly reduction in water use for July through October. (See section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D) of the Regulation.) Such reductions may be demonstrated by a number of mechanisms, including pumping reports, conservation measures, electric bills, or planting decisions.

The State Water Board received a proposal from Rocking M Ranch (petitioner) for approval of a groundwater local cooperative solution that includes commitments to reduce water use by at least 30 percent as specified under Regulation section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D)(ii). This proposal provides for reduced water use from groundwater wells on approximately 515 acres associated with Assessor's Parcel Numbers 014-121-370, 014-121-380, 014-121-390, 014-121-400, 014-390-200, 014-390-210, 014-390-220, 014-400-080, 024-320-020, 024-320-370, 024-320-380, 024-320-420, 024-330-020, 024-330-030, 024-330-040, 024-330-150, 024-330-160, 024-330-170,

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

024-330-320, 024-340-150, 024-340-170, based on information provided by the petitioner in the local cooperative solution proposal. These parcels comprise land that is owned and operated by Rocking M Ranch. The proposal indicates that the petitioner has two surface water rights and that the petitioner will not make use of these water rights to replace conserved groundwater.

The proposal includes detailed spreadsheets describing the conservation plan's water saving compared to 2020, maps, a narrative description of conservation actions, and a tracking method. The proposed local cooperative solution sets forth verifiable conservation measures to reduce water use on the identified parcels by 34 percent, relative to a 2020 baseline. The proposed conservation actions include: reducing the sizes of handline and wheel line sprinkler nozzles, shortening wheel line sets, foregoing use of end guns, fallowing some fields for the entire season, and ceasing irrigation on some fields by July 1, 2022.

The proposal includes a Binding Agreement (Agreement) with the Siskiyou Resource Conservation District (RCD) granting the Siskiyou RCD with sufficient access to verify compliance with the proposal.

The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the local cooperative solution proposal and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with the following condition:

- To the extent surface water is available to the petitioner, surface water used in the 2022 irrigation season shall not exceed the amount of water used during the 2020 irrigation season, nor decrease the estimated 34 percent reduction in groundwater use approved as part of this local cooperative solution.

As determined by the Regulation under section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), continued diversions under this local cooperative solution are reasonable and will not result in injury to other legal users of water. Your local cooperative solution proposal, updated May 13, 2022, including the conservation plan, together with the terms of your executed Agreement dated April 21, 2022, are hereby conditionally approved.

As described in Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(2), any violations of this approval are subject to enforcement as a violation of the Regulation. Additionally, violations of other provisions of the Regulation (e.g., prohibition on inefficient livestock watering, surface water curtailment) may result in termination of this approval. Any changes to the approved local cooperative solution or Agreement shall be submitted to the Deputy Director for review and approval prior to implementation.

So long as this approval and the terms of the proposal and the Agreement remain in effect, the curtailments associated with groundwater rights SG003216, SG003606, SG004008, and SG004444 are suspended as to the above-referenced properties that are owned and operated by Rocking M Ranch and that are part of this proposal. Please note that this approval does not affect the curtailment status of any surface water rights.

Thank you for your efforts to help support both farming and fisheries in the Scott River watershed during this drought emergency.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please reach out to staff by email at: [ScottShastaDrought@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:ScottShastaDrought@waterboards.ca.gov) or leave a message on our phone line at: (916) 327-3113.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Ekdahl", with the word "for" written in a smaller font below it.

Erik Ekdahl  
Deputy Director  
Division of Water Rights

ec: Siskiyou RCD  
Email: [chris@siskiyourcd.com](mailto:chris@siskiyourcd.com)