

PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT (Lead Agency)
KERN COUNTY WATER AGENCY (Responsible Agency)

FRESNO, KINGS, AND KERN COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA

Project Title: Storage and Exchange of Central Valley Project Water; Westlands Water District to Semitropic Water Storage District and Return, with an Agreement Between the Department of Water Resources and Westlands Water District.

Project Description: Westlands Water District (WWD), on behalf of certain WWD growers (some of which are common landowners in the Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) service area), proposes to divert up to 50,000 acre-feet (AF) of Central Valley Project (CVP) supplies for delivery to Semitropic Water Storage District's (Semitropic) banking facilities in the 2017-18 water year. Semitropic, a member unit of KCWA, would facilitate the return of this water in future years to meet the applicable growers' crop demands in WWD.

The parties anticipate that WWD CVP supplies would move to Semitropic for banking in the spring of 2017 through May 31, 2018. The up to 50,000 AF of WWD CVP water supply proposed for temporary diversion and storage at Semitropic is currently stored within the federal share of San Luis Reservoir, and scheduled for delivery to WWD prior to March 1, 2018 (or delivered within the anticipated 2017-18 rescheduling period that may extend through May 31, 2018). The WWD CVP water supply would be released from the federal share of San Luis Reservoir and conveyed through the San Luis Canal and California Aqueduct, and ultimately delivered at Semitropic turnouts within Reach 10A of the California Aqueduct, and/or KCWA turnouts where Semitropic has rights to deliver water to the Kern Water Bank (Reach 12E or otherwise).

Semitropic would use the delivery of WWD CVP water for groundwater banking (in-lieu or direct groundwater infiltration). The applicable WWD growers would receive a banking credit in Semitropic which could be used to return water to such WWD growers at a later date.

The return of the banked groundwater would occur via an exchange. This exchange may be accomplished under three possible scenarios:

- WWD growers would exchange the requested amount of banked water for an equal amount of Semitropic's allocation of SWP Table A water. Semitropic's SWP Table A water would be released from the San Luis Reservoir and delivered to WWD in the ordinary course from the California Aqueduct. An equal amount would be deducted from the applicable WWD growers' water bank account at Semitropic.

- WWD growers would exchange the requested amount of banked water for an equal amount of CVP water. A non-CVP water type stored in San Luis Reservoir would be made available where it would be exchanged for CVP water and delivered to the applicable growers' lands within WWD as they would normally receive their CVP supply. An equal amount of water would be deducted from the applicable WWD growers' water bank account at Semitropic.
- Semitropic would pump groundwater stored on behalf of WWD into the California Aqueduct. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) would use that water to meet Table A deliveries to SWP contractors downstream, thereby freeing up SWP Table A Water for delivery to the applicable growers' lands within WWD. Water would be delivered to WWD in the ordinary course from the California Aqueduct. An equal amount would be deducted from WWD's water bank account at Semitropic.

The returned water would be delivered to the applicable growers' WWD lands currently in production and would result in no new lands being cultivated.

Project Location: Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) Contractor service areas and existing CVP and SWP project facilities in Fresno, Kings, and Kern Counties.


Environmental Finding: Based on the environmental analysis performed and summarized in the attached Initial Study and Environmental Checklist, Westlands Water District finds that the Proposed Project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. The Proposed Project will not result in any adverse effects which fall within the "Mandatory Findings of Significance" contained in Section 15065 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are necessary.

This Negative Declaration will be deemed final and effective if no appeal is filed in the manner specified by Section 45 (b) of the Amended Local Guidelines Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act.

This Negative Declaration was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Submitted by:



Westlands Water District

May 2, 2017

Date