

Agency: Oakdale Irrigation District
Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13
Self-Certification Form

BACKGROUND: Consistent with the March 28, 2022 Drought Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) developed this self-certification form to allow local agencies to submit their proposed recharge projects to DWR and that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. After reviewing the information submitted via this self-certification form, DWR will review and may concur. A list of activities eligible for the CEQA suspension is maintained on DWR's website at: <https://water.ca.gov/Water-Basics/Drought>.

INSTRUCTIONS: Entities carrying out a proposed recharge project that may meet the objectives of Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13 should complete this self-certification form as soon as possible to initiate DWR's review and potential concurrence that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. Please submit one self-certification form for each individual project. For questions, please email SGMPS@water.ca.gov.

- 1. Please provide a short description of the proposed recharge project in which you are seeking a CEQA suspension, demonstrating how it is consistent with Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 (include historical land use and current land use on the proposed project location):**

The Oakdale Irrigation District (OID, or District) – a member agency of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency (STRGBA GSA) – is beginning to implement an In-Lieu and Direct Recharge Project – Paulsell Lateral Expansion (Project) to support groundwater sustainability in the Modesto Subbasin Number 5-22-02 (Subbasin). Through OID's 10-year Out-of-District Water Sales Program (10-Year Program), OID proposes to divert up to 25,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of available surface water from the Stanislaus River under existing water rights to facilitate recharge outside OID's service area in the Modesto and Eastern San Joaquin Subbasins. Of the total 25,000 AFY, OID anticipates it will deliver approximately 20,000 AFY of available surface water in the Modesto Subbasin. However, infrastructure improvements are needed to increase the capacity of OID's Paulsell Lateral to convey the available surface water to lands currently depended on groundwater.

The Project will allow OID to deliver most of the 20,000 AFY through OID's Paulsell Lateral to facilitate in-lieu and direct recharge on approximately 6,400 acres of previously developed, groundwater-dependent agricultural lands in the Non-District East Management Area (NDE MA). Infrastructure Project improvements will provide additional in-lieu recharge benefits by improving irrigation service to approximately 4,600 acres of in-District lands that are served by OID (Area Served) but have resorted in part to pumping groundwater to supplement irrigation due to irrigation service issues on the Paulsell Lateral. In total, the Project is expected to provide in-lieu and direct recharge benefits across 11,000 irrigated acres in the Subbasin.

The Project will strategically rehabilitate, automate, and increase the capacity of the Paulsell Lateral from 30 cubic feet per second (CFS) up to a maximum of 180 CFS at the headgate located at Cashman Dam to accommodate and deliver available surface water to the Area Served by the Project. The entire length of the Paulsell Lateral will be thoroughly evaluated to confirm the

specific infrastructure improvements needed to increase capacity (e.g. canal and siphon enlargements) and the automation improvements to enhance operations and provide optimal groundwater sustainability.

OID has divided the Paulsell Lateral into three reaches for planning purposes. The anticipated infrastructure improvements on each reach include:

- Reach 1 (28,500 feet): Canal earthwork, tunnel rehabilitations (two each), culvert replacements, and siphon replacements to accommodate up to 180 CFS; canal concrete lining (approximately 30,000 square feet (SF)); replacement of five check (i.e. canal drop) structures.*
- Reach 2 (15,000 feet): Canal earthwork, siphon replacement, and culvert replacements to accommodate up to 65 CFS; replacement of four check structures; installation of seven turnouts and flow meters (24 inches).*
- Reach 3 (10,280 feet): Canal earthwork and culvert replacements to accommodate up to 50 CFS; replacement of four check structures; installation of three turnouts with stilling wells and one turnout with a flow meter (24 inches).*
- All Reaches: Full Rubicon Total Channel Control (TCC) automation on all check structures for upstream and downstream level control and flow control.*

2. Please describe the anticipated benefits and the basis of those benefits from implementing the proposed recharge project (in acre-feet/year or estimated volume of water, if possible):

The Project is anticipated to increase groundwater levels, increase groundwater storage, prevent subsidence (by reducing withdrawal of groundwater), support interconnected surface water, and increase water supply reliability.

OID anticipates delivering up to 20,000 AFY of surface water in the Subbasin in all years sufficient surface water supply is available. Historically (2010-2019), OID's surface water allocation was reduced in 30% of years; however, OID still had available surface water allocations for in-District use in 100% of years and some availability for out-of-District use in 90% of years. OID conservatively estimates that the 10-year Program deliveries will occur in 70% of years, delivering at least 14,000 AFY in the subbasin, on average. With continued conveyance system improvements and modernization under OID's water Resources Plan, surface water availability is anticipated to increase in the future. Some of this surface water will provide in-lieu recharge benefits by directly replacing and equal volume of groundwater pumping, while the remaining water is expected to provide direct recharge benefits through seepage from conveyance infrastructure and on-farm deep percolation. The Project is also expected to improve irrigation service to OID's in-District customers served by Paulsell Lateral (approximately 4,600 acres), broadly encouraging beneficial use of available surface water in lieu of groundwater.

3. Please identify the category this proposed recharge project would fall under (multiple answers can be selected):

- Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge.*
- DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program. (selected option)*
- Other.*

4. Please identify which of the objectives the proposed recharge project meets as described in the Executive Order (multiple answers can be selected):

Projects is on Open Lands (which are those lands that are native or largely undeveloped from agricultural or industrial practices. These lands could include flood bypasses, natural areas, wildlife preserves, or existing managed wetlands.)

Project is on Working Lands (which are those lands that have been previously developed for agricultural or other industrial practices. These lands could include active or fallowed agricultural lands, gravel and sand operations, open storage fields, or other similar working lands.) (selected option)

5. Please describe how the proposed recharge project meets the following objectives as described in the Executive Order:

Project will help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by the drought (To mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought, projects should include the replenishment of groundwater resources to the subsurface, especially shallow aquifers, for the purpose of storage, temporary or otherwise. Drought impacts to groundwater conditions would include lowering of groundwater levels that may have occurred due to lack of natural recharge or groundwater pumping that may especially impact shallow aquifers.)

6. What funding sources are supporting the proposed recharge project? (Please list all local, state, federal, private or public funding sources).

The proposed Project is supported with funding from the Sustainable Groundwater Management Program and received a grant from DWR in the amount of \$14,383,000 for the proposed Project. OID is the lead applicant and grant manager.

7. Please provide the estimated project start date:

Design phase began on January 2, 2024

8. Please provide the estimated project end date or date project can be considered operational:

March 1, 2026

9. Please identify if the proposed recharge project requires a new water right permit to be issued by the State Water Board under their Groundwater Storage Water Rights Permitting process.

If an existing water right is being used, please provide the permit number under the 'Other' category (For more information, visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/applications/groundwater_recharge/):

No new water right is needed; already have existing water rights or agreements for this proposed recharge project. (selected option)

Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (180 days).

Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (1 to 5 years).

Need a streamlined permit for a standard water right.

- Need a standard water right for this recharge project.
- Other.

10. When do you anticipate your proposed recharge project will be ready for construction phase (i.e. shovel ready)?

November 1, 2024

11. Are there other permitting requirements necessary to carry out the proposed recharge project. If so, please describe.

As part of due diligence, applicable federal, State, and local agencies will be consulted to verify permitting obligations. As part of the Project, OID will secure environmental, biological, and cultural technical studies to provide optimal avoidance and minimization measures to reduce potential environmental impacts, and to support regulatory compliance permits. The following represents a list of potential agencies/permits that will be addressed after initial agency consultations:

- *California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Fish and Game Code 1602, Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement;*
- *United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Clean Water Act Section 404, Nationwide Permit;*
- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Clean Water Act Section 401, Certification;*
- *RWQCB, Waste Discharge Requirement or Waiver; and/or*
- *State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), 2022 Construction Stormwater General Permit, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ.*

Although avoidance and minimization measures will be part of the Project design and implementation activities, further coordination may be required with CDFW to provide additional measures and permitting to address potential listed species.

12. Please describe if there are any anticipated water quality or other environmental impacts associated with the proposed recharge project (if so, please describe the mitigation measures that will be taken to remedy or offset those impacts):

Water quality impacts may occur as a result of Project construction, which would be addressed through compliance with the SWRCB NPDES, 2022 Construction Stormwater General Permit, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ. Compliance includes preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which provides project-specific processes and implementation requirements to reduce runoff pollution and provide erosion controls and sediment stabilization measures. OID will comply with General Permit regulations and SWPPP requirements prior to the start of construction.

Additional environmental protective measures as part of the Project include environmental technical studies to identify and evaluate potential impacts prior to the start of construction. These studies will help guide Project design and protect resources. Technical studies include:

- *Biological Resources Reconnaissance-level Survey*

- *Aquatic Resources Delineation Report to identify potential waters of the United States and/or waters of the State*
- *Cultural Resources records search and findings report*

Further protective measures will be provided and implemented through agency permitting processes. Protection mitigation measures are included in permits granted by regulatory agencies (as described in Section 11 above). Species and habitat protection, water quality best management practices, and post-construction restoration, to name a few, are standard mitigation measures required under the permitting and reporting process.

Together, these mitigation measures and protection strategies will reduce or eliminate environmental impacts associated with Project construction.

13. Please provide the name of the Local Agency implementing the proposed recharge project:
Oakdale Irrigation District

14. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact First and Last Name:
Eric Thorburn

15. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact Email and Phone Number:
ethorburn@oakdaleirrigation.com (209) 840-5525

16. Please identify the groundwater basin in which the proposed recharge project will be located. If possible, please provide the proposed project location coordinates (latitude, longitude). (For more information, visit:
<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/index.jsp?appid=gasmaster&rz=true>):
The proposed Project is located within the Modesto Subbasin approximately 6 miles east of the City of Oakdale. The headgate of the Paulsell Lateral is located at (37.775521, -120.710307). The Paulsell Lateral Spill is located at (37.705556, -120.696946).

17. Please provide the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) or Alternative to a GSP that the proposed recharge project is associated:
GSA: STRGBA GSA & County of Tuolumne GSA
GSP: Modesto Subbasin GSP

18. Please provide any additional information you would like to include in your Self-Certification Form:
OID is confident that the Project meets the objective of Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13 with respect to actively providing a robust recharge project for the Modesto Subbasin and the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program.

In signing this self-certification form, I understand that the Department of Water Resources will rely on this signed certification form to determine if a concurrence with the Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 is granted for the project described and that false and/or inaccurate representations in this self-certification form may result in the invalidation of the CEQA suspension.

Furthermore, I understand that by receiving concurrence from the Department of Water Resources concerning eligibility for the CEQA suspension outlined in EO N-7-22, DWR makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the project feasibility, benefits claimed from the completed project, adequacy of the project, potential environmental impacts of the construction activities or completed project, and expressly disclaims liability for project performance, environmental impacts during and after construction, project construction disturbances, unmitigated environmental impacts post-construction, or project failures.

Original document signed by Eric Thorburn on 3/27/2024.

Name of Authorized Representative	Signature	Date
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Title	Agency
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