

Attachment A

Agency: Tri-County Water Authority 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 Allensworth Project (Project) is a multi-benefit recharge and flood management project to benefit a historic and severely disadvantaged community (SDAC) while helping the Tule Subbasin achieve long-term sustainability. The goal of the Project is to build a series of basins to capture flood waters from the White River. A large berm will be constructed along the western portion of the basin that parallels the proposed High-Speed Rail (HSR) alignment. The overall facility plan also includes a wildlife habitat, a wastewater treatment plant, and a local recreational park. The Project provides several benefits to the SDAC of Allensworth, GSA, and Subbasin which include: (1) Environmental protection and improvement, (2) Pollution control, (3) Water supply reliability and security, (4) Water conservation/Reduce subsidence, and (5) Community involvement. Detailed descriptions of these benefits are provided on the following pages.

The proposed project will be located on property owned by the Angiola Water District (AWD). The basin will be located west of Highway 43 and adjacent to the SDAC of Allensworth. The basin location will be strategically placed downstream of the SDAC to best capture floodwaters. Currently, the site is fallowed land with slight vegetation growth with portions used for grazing.

The multi-phase Allensworth Project will begin by building out the northern portion with four 20-acre cells that can store an approximate total of 440 acre-feet of flood water. Each cell will be approximately four feet deep with a connecting pipeline to allow floodwaters to fill the individual cells. A connecting pipeline will be installed in the existing White River Channel to bring floodwaters into the basin. A berm will be placed along the western portion of the basin. The berm will be approximately five feet in height and ten feet in width to reduce the noise impacts from the HSR on the community.

Future phases of construction will include a walking path on top of the berm, a recreational park with facilities, and more recharge cells a packaged municipal water treatment plant, and wildlife habitat areas.

A geophysical investigation will be conducted for the Allensworth Project to ensure recharge potential at the basin site. This Project will complement the efforts of the TCWA and Tule Subbasin GSP by using floodwaters to recharge and benefit habitat, as the Project is located between the Pixley and Kern refuges and will provide a natural flyway when water is present. Additionally, the Allensworth Project will implement the Tulare County Flood Control District's existing Flood Control Master Plan that sites "the need for coordinating the detailed planning of projects for control of the White River" to reduce flooding and increase groundwater recharge (pg. 45). The Project is also included in the Tule River Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Project List and sites the following category benefits: Climate Change, Drought, SGMA (Tule River Basin IRWM, p 132).

The Project will benefit the SDAC of Allensworth and the TCWA which is considered one of the top three over-drafted GSAs in the Tule Subbasin. The Tule Subbasin GSAs have agreed that this Project will help bring the Subbasin closer to achieving sustainability by protecting water quality, stabilizing groundwater levels, and reducing storage loss which will ultimately support the GSA and Subbasin to meet the measurable objectives and minimum thresholds as part of the Sustainable Management Criteria documented in the GSP.

- 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 Allensworth Project aims to address multiple environmental and community challenges by capturing approximately 1,500 acre-feet of flood water per year from the White River. This initiative will protect the SDAC and surrounding communities from flood damage while creating new wildlife habitats, offering around 60 acres for wildlife upon completion. The project will also prevent water pollution by capturing stormwater and reducing noise and air pollution from the High-Speed Rail (HSR). By capturing local surface water to recharge the Upper Aquifer, the project will improve water supply reliability and offset groundwater pumping demands. Additionally, it will reduce overdraft and subsidence by utilizing surface water for recharging the Upper Aquifer instead of pumping the Lower Aquifer. The project will also enhance the SDAC with flood protection and a recreational park, fostering community involvement and engagement with stakeholders and local residents.

- 3. Please identify the category this proposed recharge project would fall under (multiple answer can be selected):**
 - Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge.
 - DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program. (Selected option).
 - Other: In Lieu Recharge.

- 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.) (Selected option).

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

Proposition 1 SGM Implementation Grant Round 1, Department of Conservation Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Grant.

7. Please provide the estimated project start date:

3/23/23.

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

12/31/2025.

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. (Selected option).

Other.

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

June 2024.

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

Permits required to carry out the proposed recharge project include 1. Notice of Intent (NOI) & Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), 2. Dust Control Plan & Construction Notification, 3. Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) Exemption, and 4. Grading Permit.

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):

We anticipate that this recharge project will not result in any water quality or other adverse impacts. The project is expected to improve water quality for the community by mitigating flood impacts to the water distribution system.

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

Tri-County Water Authority.

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

Amer Hussain.

15. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact Email and Phone Number:

ahussain@Geosyntec.com; 559-479-2013.

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>):

Tule Subbasin, within Tri-County Water Authority jurisdiction. Coordinates: 35°52'6.17"N, 119°24'4.80"W.

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:

Basin 5-022.13, Tri-County Water Authority Tule GSP.

18. Please provide any additional information you would like to include in your Self-Certification Form:

The project is already in the preliminary design process with the support of the community. The community is provided with regular updates on the project's progress. In addition, a water rights application was submitted by AWD for the White River.

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 Amer Hussain on 9/19/23

Name of Authorized Representative

Signature

Date

Title

Agency