



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Permitting of New Drinking Water Supply Well Source

Applicant Information: Growers Direct Nut Co., 2288 Geer Road, Hughson, CA 95326

Project Location: 0 Whitmore Ave., Hughson, CA 95326

Project Location – County: Stanislaus

APN: 018-010-021

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Description of Project: The proposed project involves permitting of a new water source for a small non-community water system at the Growers Direct Nut food processing facility. A single well is currently used to supply operations and drinking water at the facility. The well is outdated and water produced from the well contains elevated concentrations of nitrate above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for drinking water, necessitating that it only be used for process water and no longer be used for potable purposes. A well has been constructed that will provide a new water source to the system that can be used for both process water and potable needs. The new well is located along the eastern parcel boundary, approximately 400-feet to the northeast of the existing well. The new well will pump groundwater from deeper in the aquifer where nitrate impacts are not present. The existing well will continue to provide water for fire protection only, which is expected to be a de minimis water demand. The new well meets the criteria for a replacement well under the County Groundwater Ordinance because there will be no increase in groundwater demand at the facility due to construction and operation of the new well.

Name of Agency Approving Project: Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources

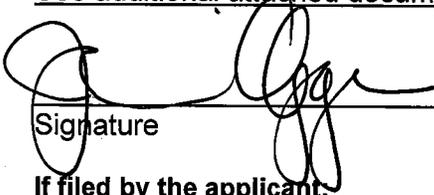
Lead Agency Contact Person: Karl Quinn

Telephone: (209) 525-6757

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: per CCR Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Sections 15300 to 15333
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____
- General Exemption.

Reasons why the project is exempt: The new well (Permit #18-209) meets the Categorical Exemption criteria for a replacement well and a de minimus extractor under the County Groundwater Ordinance (9.37) because there will be no increase in groundwater demand at the facility due to construction and operation of the new well. See additional attached documentation for more information.



 Signature

Director

 Title

3/13/19

 Date

Data removed from posting 4/27/19

If filed by the applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Determination - Part 1 of 2

Project Name:

Permitting of New Drinking Water Supply Well Source

Project Sponsor:

Growers Direct Nut Co., 2288 Geer Road. Hughson, CA 95326

Lead Agency Contact:

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CEQA Categorical Exemption Type (per CCR Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Sections 15300 to 15333):

Class 2- Replacement or Reconstruction Project: Consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced including but not limited to replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity.

Project Description:

The proposed project involves permitting of a new water source (Permit #18-209) for a small non-community water system at the Growers Direct Nut food processing facility. A single well is currently used to supply operations and drinking water at the facility. The well is outdated and water produced from the well contains elevated concentrations of nitrate above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for drinking water, necessitating that it only be used for process water and no longer be used for potable purposes. A well has been constructed that will provide a new water source to the system that can be used for both process water and potable needs. The new well is located along the eastern parcel boundary, approximately 400-feet to the northeast of the existing well. The new well will pump groundwater from deeper in the aquifer where nitrate impacts are not present. The existing well will continue to provide water for fire protection only, which is expected to be a de minimis water demand. The new well meets the criteria for a replacement well under the County Groundwater Ordinance because there will be no increase in groundwater demand at the facility due to construction and operation of the new well.

CEQA Appendix G Resource Areas - Screening for Potential Impacts

Aesthetics

The proposed well will be located in the vicinity of the existing well at the existing Growers Direct Nut food processing facility. The new well will not degrade the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect aesthetic resources.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Determination - Part 1 of 2

Agricultural Resources

Construction and operation of the proposed well will not result in changes to the existing land use. Agricultural acreage will not increase or decrease as a result of the new well. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect agricultural resources.

Air Quality

Emissions associated with well construction activities will be short term in nature and performed using CARB-registered mobile emissions sources. Emissions are not expected to exceed San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District construction project standards. Well operation impacts to air quality are expected to be negligible since the well will be powered by electricity and its operation replaces existing operation. **Conclusion:** The project will not significantly affect air quality.

Biological Resources

The project location is in a previously disturbed area, devoid of vegetation, within the fenced Growers Direct Nut food processing facility boundaries. Further, the operation of the well will not increase total facility demand for groundwater and will not result in impacts to groundwater dependent ecosystems. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect biological resources.

Cultural Resources

Well construction activities will take place entirely within a disturbed area located within the developed facility boundaries. Operation of the well will not result in any land use changes or associated ground disturbing activities. **Conclusion:** The proposed project will not affect cultural resources.

Energy

The total energy demand associated with pumping groundwater at the facility is not expected to increase significantly due to the operation of the new well. **Conclusion:** The proposed project will not affect energy use.

Geology/Soils

A water supply well will not cause injury or harm to humans associated with seismic activities or ground instability. Further, the operation of the new well will not increase total facility demand for groundwater, so lowering of the groundwater table and subsidence do not warrant further consideration. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect geology and soils.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Emissions associated with well construction activities will be short term in nature and are not expected to exceed standards set by the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District for construction projects. Well operation impacts to air quality are expected to be negligible since the well will be powered by electricity and will replace existing well operations. **Conclusion:** The project will not significantly affect GHG emissions.

Hazards & Hazardous Materials

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Determination - Part 1 of 2

Construction and operation of the proposed well are unlikely to create a hazard, impair an emergency response plan, or result in the release of a hazardous substance. Water treatment operations will not change. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect hazards or hazardous materials.

Hydrology/Water Quality

The groundwater demand at the site will remain unchanged but will be shifted somewhat deeper within the same aquifer system. The new well is located approximately 400-feet to the northeast of the existing well. The closest irrigation well to the site evident on a Google Earth image is located in an orchard on an adjoining parcel approximately 1,000 feet east-northeast of the new well. The distance between this irrigation well location and the existing well is approximately 1,400 feet. The closest residence to the site is located approximately 800 feet to the south of the new well. The distance between this residence, that is presumably served by a domestic well, and the existing facility well is approximately 550 feet. Based on these distances and the fact that the groundwater extraction at the site will remain unchanged, it is assumed that operation of the new well will not cause significant changes in drawdown that would adversely affect neighboring irrigation or domestic wells. Operation of the proposed well is expected to improve water quality for the non-community public water system as the result of the proposed well pumping water from deeper in the aquifer where nitrate impacts are not present. Sanitary seal requirements were included in the permit conditions that are intended to prevent the downward migration of nitrate from the shallow aquifer system due to well operation. **Conclusion:** The project will result in improved water quality for the facility, and will not significantly affect water quality or hydrologic conditions within the aquifer.

Land Use/Planning

Construction and operation of the proposed well will not result in any change in land use, and will not conflict with existing zoning or land use plans. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect land use or planning.

Mineral Resources

The proposed well location is on a parcel zoned for agricultural use. Mining activities are not consistent with the current zoning. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect mineral resources.

Noise

Agricultural and food processing operations in agriculturally zoned areas are exempt from the Noise Ordinance. Noise associated with well construction activities will be temporary in nature and is not expected to differ from noise levels allowed under the Conditional Use Permit for the facility expansion project of which the well is a part. Noise generated by the operation of a submersible well pump is not expected to differ from noise levels allowed under the Use Permit for the facility. **Conclusion:** The project will not have a significant effect on noise levels.

Population/Housing

Water supplied by the well will not result in an increase in population or demand for housing in the vicinity of the project. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect population and housing.

Public Services

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Determination - Part 1 of 2

Construction and operation of the well will not increase the demand for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public services.
Conclusion: The project will not affect public resources.

Recreation

The project site and surrounding area are zoned for general agricultural use. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect recreational resources.

Transportation/Traffic

Construction and operation of the well will not cause a significant or ongoing increase in traffic or changes in transportation patterns. **Conclusion:** The project will not significantly affect transportation or traffic.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Well construction activities will take place entirely within a disturbed area located within the facility boundaries. Further, the operation of the well will not result in changes in land use or any ground disturbing activities. Local tribes have not requested ongoing consultation regarding Stanislaus County CEQA documents. **Conclusion:** The proposed project will not affect tribal cultural resources.

Utilities/Service Systems

The proposed well will not result in an increase in the total groundwater demand for the facility. Therefore, the facility's wastewater treatment and solid waste management demands are not expected to change as a result of the proposed well. **Conclusion:** The project will not affect utilities or service systems.

Wildfires

Construction and operation of this well will not affect any existing emergency response or evacuation plans or increase wildfire risks. **Conclusion:** The project will not have wildfire-related effects.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Evaluation - Part 2 of 2

Project Name:

Project Sponsor:

Permitting of New Drinking Water Supply Well Source

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Project Description:

The proposed project involves permitting of a new water source (Permit #18-209) for a small non-community water system at the Growers Direct Nut food processing facility. A single well is currently used to supply operations and drinking water at the facility. The well is outdated and water produced from the well contains elevated concentrations of nitrate above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for drinking water, necessitating that it only be used for process water and no longer be used for potable purposes. A well has been constructed that will provide a new water source to the system that can be used for both process water and potable needs. The new well is located along the eastern parcel boundary, approximately 400-feet to the northeast of the existing well. The new well will pump groundwater from deeper in the aquifer where nitrate impacts are not present. The existing well will continue to provide water for fire protection only, which is expected to be a de minimis water demand. The new well meets the criteria for a replacement well under the County Groundwater Ordinance because there will be no increase in groundwater demand at the facility due to construction and operation of the new well.

Does the project meet the criteria for an EXCEPTION to a Categorical Exemption per Section 15300.2? Provide brief statement supporting a yes or no response.

(a) Location- Exemption applies where a project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern.

No. The project is not located in an area where Undesirable Results, as defined in the County Groundwater Ordinance, are occurring or reasonably foreseeable. The project is located within a developed food processing facility on a parcel zoned for agricultural use with no known resources of hazardous or critical concern.

(b) Cumulative Impact - Exemption applies when, although a particular project may not have a significant impact, the impact of successive projects, of the same type, in the same place, over time is significant

No. The project is not located in an area where Undesirable Results, as defined in the County Groundwater Ordinance, are occurring or reasonably foreseeable. The proposed well will not result in a significant increase in facility demand for groundwater and does not present a concern with respect to cumulative impacts.

(c) Significant Effect - This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

No. The project does not involve any unusual circumstances that would result in a significant effect on an environmental resource.

(d) Scenic Highways - This exception applies when the project that may result in a significant impact to scenic resources visible from a scenic highway

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - Categorical Exemption Evaluation - Part 2 of 2

No. The project location is not visible from a State-designated scenic highway.

(e) Hazardous Waste Sites - A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

No. The site is not identified in the State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker data management system or on the California Department of Toxic Substances Control Cortese List.

(f) Historical Resources - A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

No. The project is located within a developed food processing facility on a parcel zoned for agricultural use with no known resources of historical significance.