

2255 Chandler Street – P.O. Box 209
Selma, California 93662
P. (559) 896-1660 | F. (559) 896-8488
www.cidwater.com

June 28, 2023

Mr. Wade Crowfoot
Secretary for Natural Resources
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Request for Suspension of the California Environmental Quality Act under Executive Order N-7-23 for Proposed Land Clearing and Groundwater Recharge Activities

Consolidated Irrigation District (District) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency make a determination that the activities proposed herein are eligible to be conducted under the suspension of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, Division 13) pursuant to paragraph 6 of the Floodwater Capture and Groundwater Recharge Executive Order N-7-23 (Executive Order).

The District is a California Irrigation District organized and existing under and by virtue of the Irrigation District Law, Division 11, of the California Water Code. The District has prior rights and was formally organized on September 8, 1921, and provides for the delivery of surface water from the Kings River to landowners within the District for irrigation and groundwater recharge.

The District also serves as the Central Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency within the Kings Subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin (Kings Subbasin), which, was designated as subject to conditions of critical overdraft by the California Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118 – Interim Update (2016). Since adopting the Central Kings Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) on December 11, 2019, the District has been taking action to avoid undesirable results by increasing groundwater recharge activities to support sustainable management of the Kings Subbasin by 2040.

In support of the Executive Order and furtherance of the Central Kings GSP, the District intends to clear agricultural plantings and construct an emergency groundwater recharge basin on District owned property located at 280 West Nebraska Ave in Fresno County (APNs 042-021-43S & 042-021-44S) (Nebraska Property). The Nebraska Property has been in agriculture production for more than 40 years and is currently planted with approximately 120 acres of grape vines, almonds trees, and pistachio trees. The District's Harlan Stevens Canal and Davis Canal converge on the Nebraska Property which provide for the conveyance of Kings River Flood Water to the proposed recharge basin (Exhibit A – Nebraska Property). It is anticipated that the proposed recharge basin would provide a minimum of 9,000 acre-feet of groundwater recharge during the current water year based on an assumed infiltration rate of 1.0 foot per day for approximately 90 days. This proposed activity

would provide a direct benefit to the region by reducing the risks of local catastrophic flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin and reducing the effects of future droughts by increasing storage in groundwater aquifers within the Kings Subbasin.

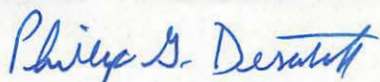
Consistent with that intent, subject in part to your determination that the activities described in this letter are eligible to proceed under paragraph 6 of the Executive Order, the District will:

1. Remove approximately 120 acres of grape vines, almond trees, and pistachio trees on the Nebraska Property. The District will utilize a land clearing contractor to remove all vineyard stakes, posts, wire, and drip tubing prior to chipping the grape vines, almond trees and pistachio trees. All chipped material will be hauled offsite.
2. Construct an emergency groundwater recharge basin and install temporary canal turnout facilities on disturbed lands. The District will utilize an earthwork contractor to grade the property and construct basin levees (not to exceed 6-feet) and levee keyways. The District will self-perform the installation canal gates from the Harlan Stevens Canal to divert floodwater into the recharge basin. The project will be phased to allow floodwater to be diverted onto a portion of the site while construction is completed on the remainder of the project.
3. Divert available Kings River water into the emergency recharge basin utilizing the District's pre-1914 and other water rights.
4. Monitor and report groundwater levels monthly.

Without the suspension of CEQA under paragraph 6 of the Executive Order, the District would have to ensure CEQA compliance (estimated at 6 months) prior to carrying out the proposed activities. A determination that the proposed activities fall within paragraph 6 of the Executive Order would facilitate the construction of the emergency recharge basin while Kings River floodwater is being discharged to the Tulare Lake Basin.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Phillip Desatoff at pdesatoff@cidwater.com or (559) 896-1660.

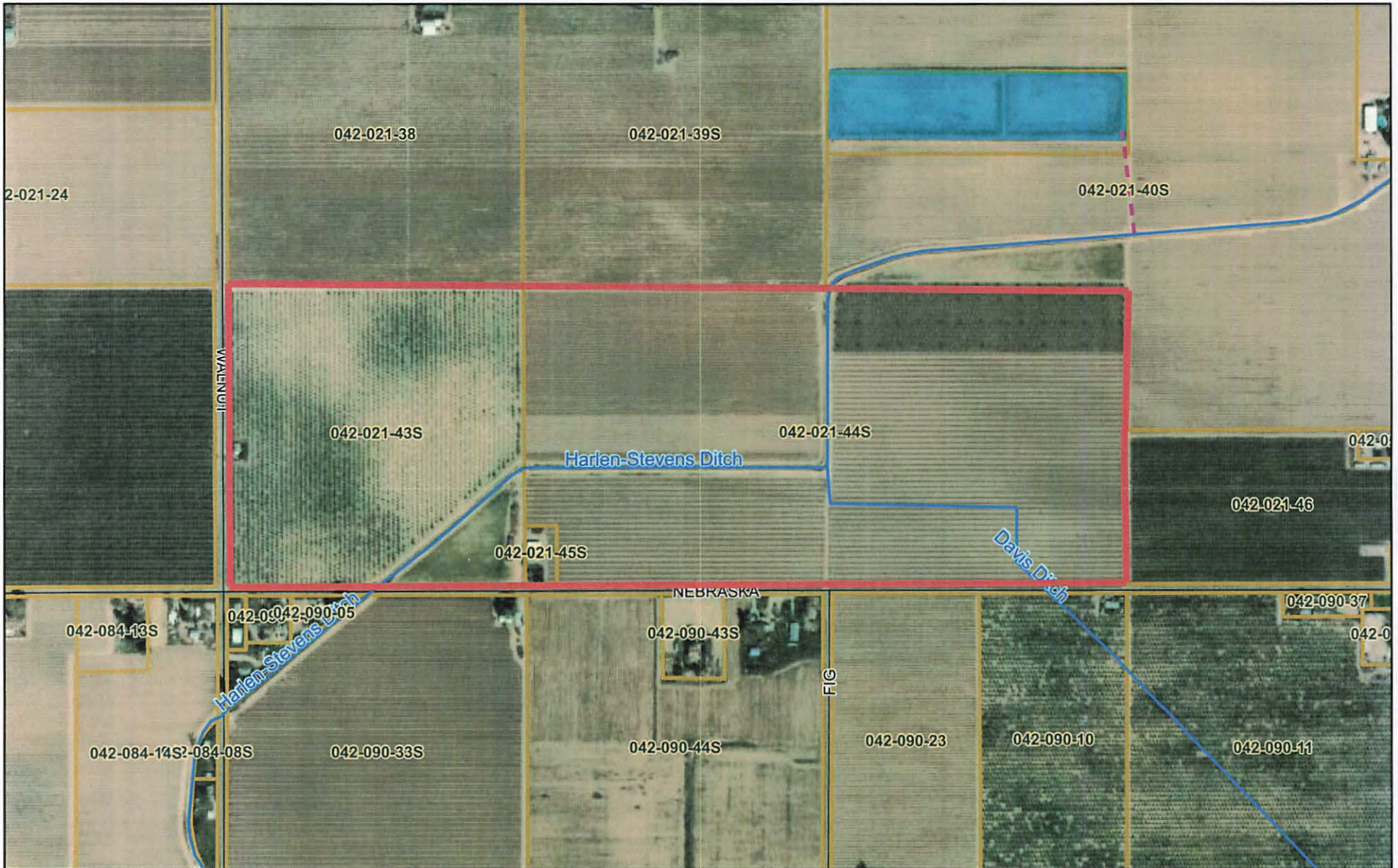
Sincerely,



Phillip G. Desatoff
General Manager

cc: Nancy Vogel, California Natural Resources Agency
Christopher Calfee, California Natural Resources Agency
Stephanie Shimazu, California Natural Resources Agency
Steven Springhorn, California Department of Water Resources
Dane Mathis, California Department of Water Resources

Exhibit A - Nebraska Property (280 W Nebraska Ave, Fresno, CA 93706)



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- District_Canals
- Ponds
- District Boundary
- - - Spillway
- Parcels
- Roads
- Fresno

