

January 30, 2024

Kris I. Lawrence
General Manager
Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District
P.O. Box 1168
Wasco, CA 93280

Re: Executive Order N-7-22: Request for Proposed Activities to be Conducted Under Suspension

Mr. Lawrence:

I am responding to your letter dated January 22, 2024, in which you request my determination that activities described in that letter are eligible to be conducted under a suspension of laws provided in paragraph 5 of Executive Order N-7-22 (March 28, 2022). Among other things, Executive Order N-7-22 suspends Public Resources Code, Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division under specified circumstances. Specifically, projects may operate under that suspension where the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency determines that the proposed activities are eligible to be conducted under this suspension, taking into account the purpose of accelerating conservation projects that are necessary to address impacts of the drought, while at the same time protecting public health and the environment. In your letter, you describe the Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District's commitment to working with landowners to permanently fallow and clear agricultural plantings on approximately 173 acres – thus conserving approximately 600 acre-feet of water a year – and using the cleared land to recharge groundwater basins. Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District commits to assess the land for potential soil contamination, construct recharge basins and install turnout facilities, and divert available Central Valley Project Friant-Kern canal system water into the basins using the District's water rights and other agreements. In addition, the District commits to monitor and report groundwater levels and quality in accordance with its groundwater monitoring program.

Because the activities described in your letter will reduce demand for surface and groundwater, I find that this project (as more fully described in your letter which is attached here) is eligible to be conducted under Executive Order N-7-22, provided that this finding is conditioned on the commitments described in your letter to not irrigate the land and, if the land is sold, to impose a non-irrigation covenant and sever from the lands the right to an allocation of District water supplies and overlying groundwater

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rights. Please note that this suspension does not alter any other requirements imposed by any other law, and any material modification of or departure from the project described in your letter may independently trigger obligations under Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) of the Public Resources Code and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wade Crowfoot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Wade Crowfoot
Secretary for Natural Resources