

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Title. El Dorado Pistachio Processing Plant Expansion Project

Project Location. The El Dorado Pistachio Processing Plant (Plant) is at 39840 El Dorado Avenue near Coalinga in Fresno County. The Plant and land application areas are between the Gujarral Hills Oil Field and Interstate 5.

Summary Description of Project. The Plant seasonally process and hulls pistachio nuts during the pistachio season from late August through October. The proposed expansion would allow the Plant to increase its average wastewater flows for the season from 0.35 million gallons per day to as much as 1 million gallons per day with a daily maximum flow of 2.5 million gallons per day and a total annual flow of 42 million gallons. The increased flows would improve hulling operations and provide better quality control within the Plant. No increase in production capacity is proposed. To handle the increased flows the associated wastewater application areas would also be expanded to include approximately 600 acres of pistachio trees. The project will involve trenching for installation of a new irrigation line to send wastewater to the new land application areas where it will be tied into the existing irrigation system for reuse.

Mitigation Measures. The following mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project:

1. Air Quality

- a. Prior to any ground disturbing activities, contact the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District to obtain any necessary permits and to ensure compliance with requirements of Regulation VIII for Fugitive Dust Control.

2. Biological Resources

- a. Contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the United States Federal Wildlife Service in advance of trenching activities to install the new irrigation line to determine whether pre-construction or protocol level surveys will be required and to ensure appropriate measures will be taken to avoid or mitigate potential impacts to special status or endangered species.

3. Cultural Resources

- a. Prior to any ground disturbing activities contact representatives on the Native American Contact List included in Attachment A to get their recommendations concerning the proposed project.
- b. In the event cultural resources are unearthed during trenching activities, all work shall be halted in the area of the find, and an Archeologist and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) shall be called to evaluate the findings and make any necessary mitigation measures.

4. Hydrology and Water Quality Resources

a. The Waste Discharge Requirements would implement the following mitigation measures to mitigate potential impacts:

- Limit the average seasonal wastewater flow to no more than 1 million gallons per day and the maximum daily flow to no more than 2.5 million gallons per day and set a total annual flow limit of 42 million gallons per year.
- Require application of wastewater at agronomic rates for nitrogen and hydraulic loading and set a cycle average BOD loading rate of 100 lbs/acre/day for applications of wastewater to the land application areas.
- Prohibit the discharge of wastewater to the land application areas during and within 24-hours of a storm event of measurable precipitation or when soils become saturated.
- Require proper management of solids and annual soil sampling within the Solids Reuse Area.
- Within 180 days of adoption of the Waste Discharge Requirements, the project proponent must have prepared and begun implementation of a salinity control plan and wastewater and nutrient management plan.

Finding. Based on information contained in the Initial Study, the project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. The mitigation measures above are necessary to avoid or reduce to a less-than-significant level the project's potential significant effects on the environment.

I, PAMELA C. CREEDON, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that this Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted by a Resolution of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region on XX December 2013.

PAMELA C. CREEDON, Executive Officer