

Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District

**Driver Road Pipeline Project**

WaterSMART Drought Response Program:  
Drought Resiliency Projects for Fiscal Year 2024  
Notice of Funding Opportunity No. R24AS00007

**Applicant**

Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District  
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October 31,2023

## Table of Contents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
PROJECT LOCATION .....	3
PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	7
PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	8
EVALUATION CRITERIA .....	9
EVALUATION CRITERION B—PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS (20 POINTS) .....	15
EVALUATION CRITERION C—SEVERITY OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL DROUGHT OR WATER SCARCITY IMPACTS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE PROJECT (15 POINTS) .....	18
EVALUATION CRITERION D—PRESIDENTIAL AND DOI PRIORITIES (15 POINTS).....	21
EVALUATION CRITERION E—READINESS TO PROCEED AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (10 POINTS).....	22
EVALUATION CRITERION F—NEXUS TO RECLAMATION (5 POINTS).....	24
EVALUATION CRITERION G – STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED PROJECT (5 POINTS) .....	24
PROJECT BUDGET.....	26
ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE .....	27
OVERLAP OR DUPLICATION OF EFFORT STATEMENT .....	29
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT.....	30
UNIFORM AUDIT REPORTING STATEMENT .....	31
OFFICIAL RESOLUTION .....	32
SF-LLL: DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITY (IF APPLICABLE) .....	33
LETTERS OF FUNDING COMMITMENT .....	34
UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM) .....	35
APPENDIX A – DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN EXCERPT .....	36
APPENDIX B – LETTERS OF SUPPORT.....	37
APPENDIX C – DROUGHT RESILIENCY WATER SUPPLY ANALYSIS.....	38

## Executive Summary

Project Information	
Date	October 31, 2023
Project Name	Driver Road Pipeline Project
Expected Completion	24 Months
Construction Start	September 2025 with a duration of no more than 6 months
Near a Federal Facility	Yes, adjacent to CVP's Friant Kern Canal
Applicant Information	
Name	Roland Gross
Title	General Manager, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District
City, County, State	Delano, Kern County, California
Applicant Category	Category A – Water District
Funding Group	Funding Group III

The Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District (SSJMUD, District) proposes to utilize their resources in a cost shared project with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation, USBR) to construct the Driver Road Pipeline Project (Project) which falls under Task A – Increasing the Reliability of Water Supplies through Infrastructure Improvements. The Project is located in Kern County and will add conveyance capacity to deliver available wet year surface supplies to district owned spreading ponds while maintaining coinciding delivery to irrigation demands. This project involves a mile-long pipeline comprising of 36-inch and 30-inch diameter C900 PVC. Its primary purpose is to enhance the conveyance capacity to bring in additional supply for recharge. The Driver Road Pipeline addresses the district's water supply challenges, including the need for enhanced groundwater recharge capacity during wet years and increased water conveyance for recharge. The San Joaquin Valley periodically faces severe drought conditions and reduced water deliveries when water storage reservoirs are at reduced levels. Increasing groundwater recharge through increased conveyance can play a crucial role in alleviating the impacts of these drought conditions, ensuring a more resilient water supply for the region. SSJMUD's Project will enhance regional drought resilience by increasing an average annual recharge by 4,169 AFY, with a 10-year average annual of 41,689 AF and increasing groundwater available for later recovery for irrigation. The Project is supported by the Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan and the IRWM Region's Drought Contingency Plan.

This Project can be completed within 24 months from the time grant funding is secured. Anticipated construction is expected to begin September 2025 for a duration of no more than six months for completion by March 2026.

### **Relevant Background Information**

SSJMUD was organized in 1935, under the Municipal Utility District Act of the Public Utility Code of California, with the purpose to obtain and provide a supply of water for lands located

within the boundaries of the District. SSJMUD first entered a 9(e) Water Services Contract with USBR in 1945. In 2011, this Water Service Contract was converted to a permanent 9(d) Repayment Contract with the USBR, which now has the benefit of being a perpetual contract for the existing amounts of contracted water supply, thus securing the District’s water supply from the Central Valley Project (CVP).

The District’s size is approximately 66,000 acres with an irrigated acreage of approximately 51,000 acres (SSJMUD Water Management Plan, 2022). A 2019 crop survey by the District, about 90% of the District’s irrigated lands are planted to permanent crops, primarily almonds (34%), grapes (34%), pistachios (10%), and oranges (10%). The Cities of Delano and McFarland are within SSJMUD’s jurisdictional area. Land within the city limits is classified as urban, with some land in deciduous crops or idle. The crop irrigation water requirement is estimated in SSJMUD’s 2020 Agricultural Water Management Plan (AWMP) update by multiplying crop-specific gross crop water usage (AF/acre) by the number of acres for each respective crop. With this method, it was estimated that approximately 126,292 AFY is needed to meet crop water demand. Presently, there are no apparent long-term trends toward increasing irrigated acreage within the District.

**Primary Water Supplies and Sources**

The District is in the CVP’s Friant Division and receives water via the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) under contract with USBR. Figure 1 illustrates CVP water deliveries to SSJMUD via the Friant FKC. Current District CVP contract supplies are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Annual Contract allocation**

<b>Water Supply</b>	<b>Annual Contract Allocation (acre-feet)</b>
CVP- Class 1	97,000
CVP- Class 2	45,000
Total	142,000

Due to climate change, regulatory requirements, and FKC capacity constraints, the District does not always receive scheduled water required to meet irrigation demands. The District's CVP supply allocations have averaged 44%, signifying a substantial decline in surface water reliability. See Table 2 for a ten-year average of FKC diversions (2013-2022) at 62,512 acre-feet per year.

**Table 2. Diversions from Friant Kern Canal**

Source	Average	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CVP, Diversions from Friant Kern Canal	62,512	60,953	5,750	3,318	73,206	113,196	97,957	104,171	<i>81,240</i>	<i>28,884</i>	<i>56,445</i>

Source: USBR Website for Mid Pacific Region Central Valley Operations ("Table 22") except District revised values as noted by *italic text*.

Years 2020-2022 have been updated from USBR Website for Mid Pacific Region Central Valley Operations Table 22 (SSJMUD- OUT)

2020: [https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table\\_22\\_2020.pdf](https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table_22_2020.pdf)

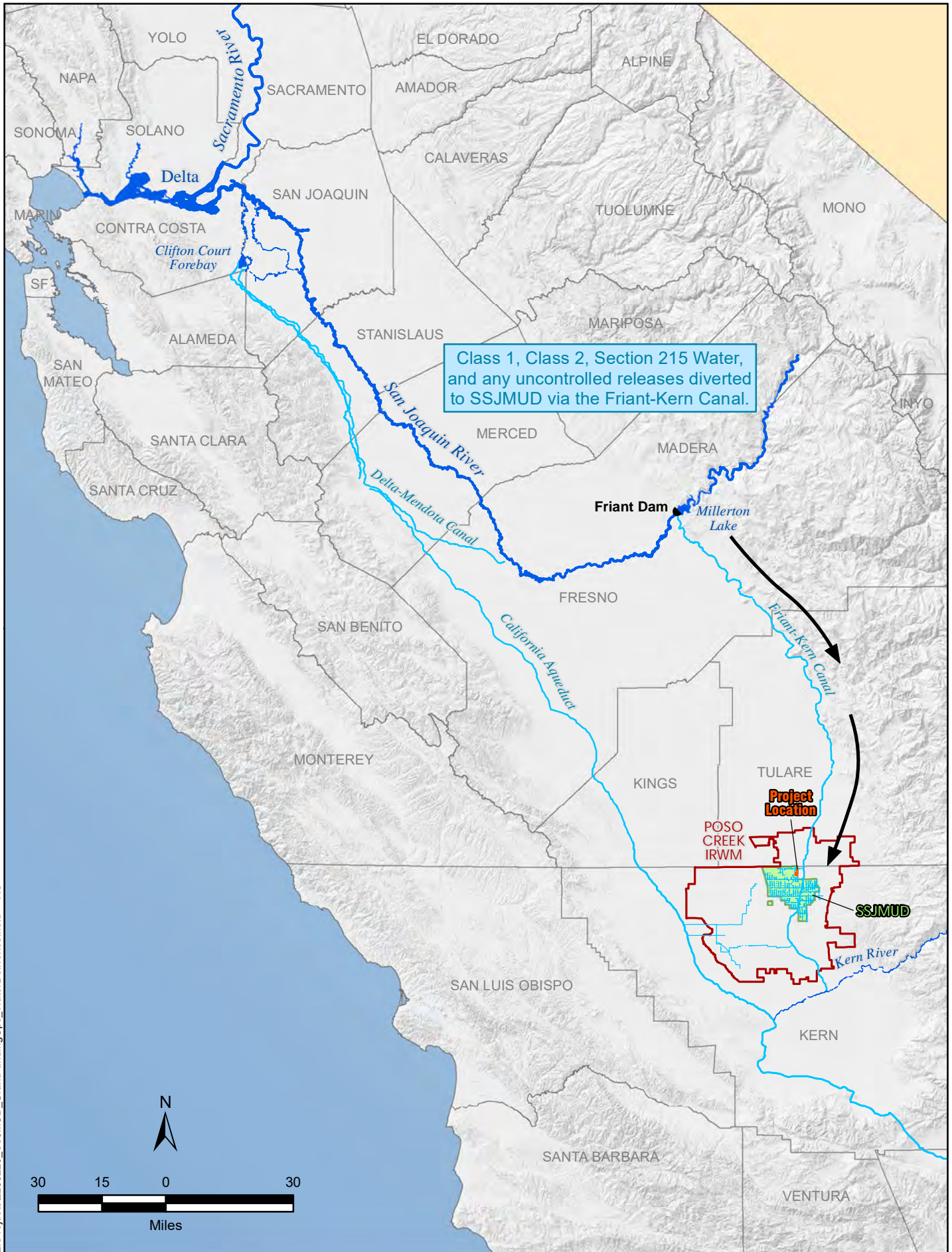
2021: [https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table\\_22\\_2021.pdf](https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table_22_2021.pdf)

2022: [https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table\\_22\\_2022.pdf](https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/table_22_2022.pdf)

### **Project Location**

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The Project is in Kern County, California approximately 30 miles northwest of the City of Bakersfield. The Project will be constructed 2 miles west of State Route (SR) 99. The pipeline will run 0.9 miles South on Driver Road and 0.25 miles West on 9th Avenue. The project starting latitude and longitude is 35°46'59.3"N, 119°12'19.2"W and ending at 35°46'07.1"N, 119°12'35.1"W. The location of the pipeline and FKC in relation to existing spreading ponds is shown in Figure 2. Specific project features and alignment of the pipeline are shown in Figure 3.



Class 1, Class 2, Section 215 Water, and any uncontrolled releases diverted to SSJMU via the Friant-Kern Canal.

**Project Location**

POSO CREEK IRWM

SSJMU

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Drought Resiliency Project  
Kern County, California

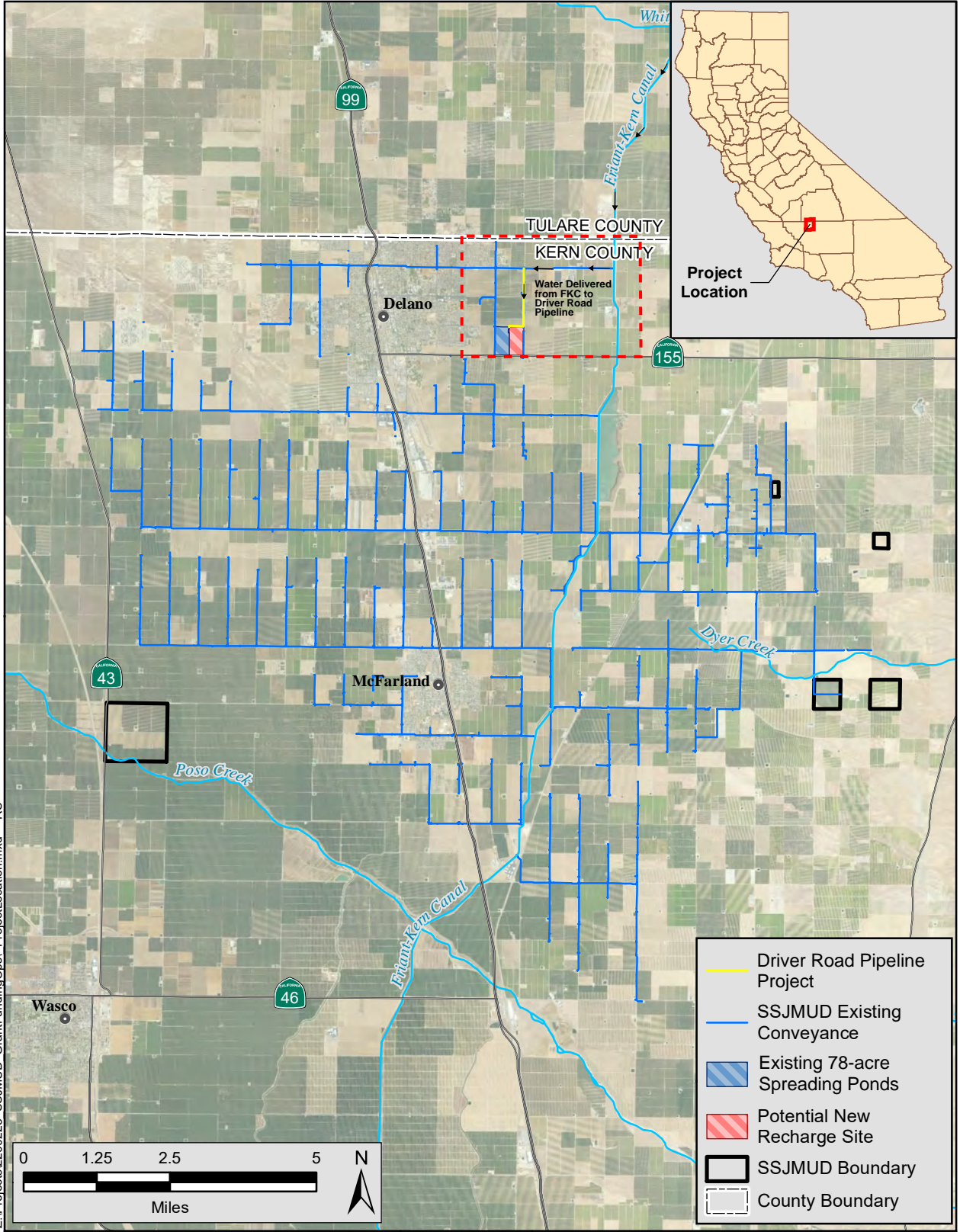
Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District



Water Deliveries into SSJMU

OCTOBER 2023

Figure 1



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03-Oct-2023

Drought Resiliency Project  
Kern County, California

Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District

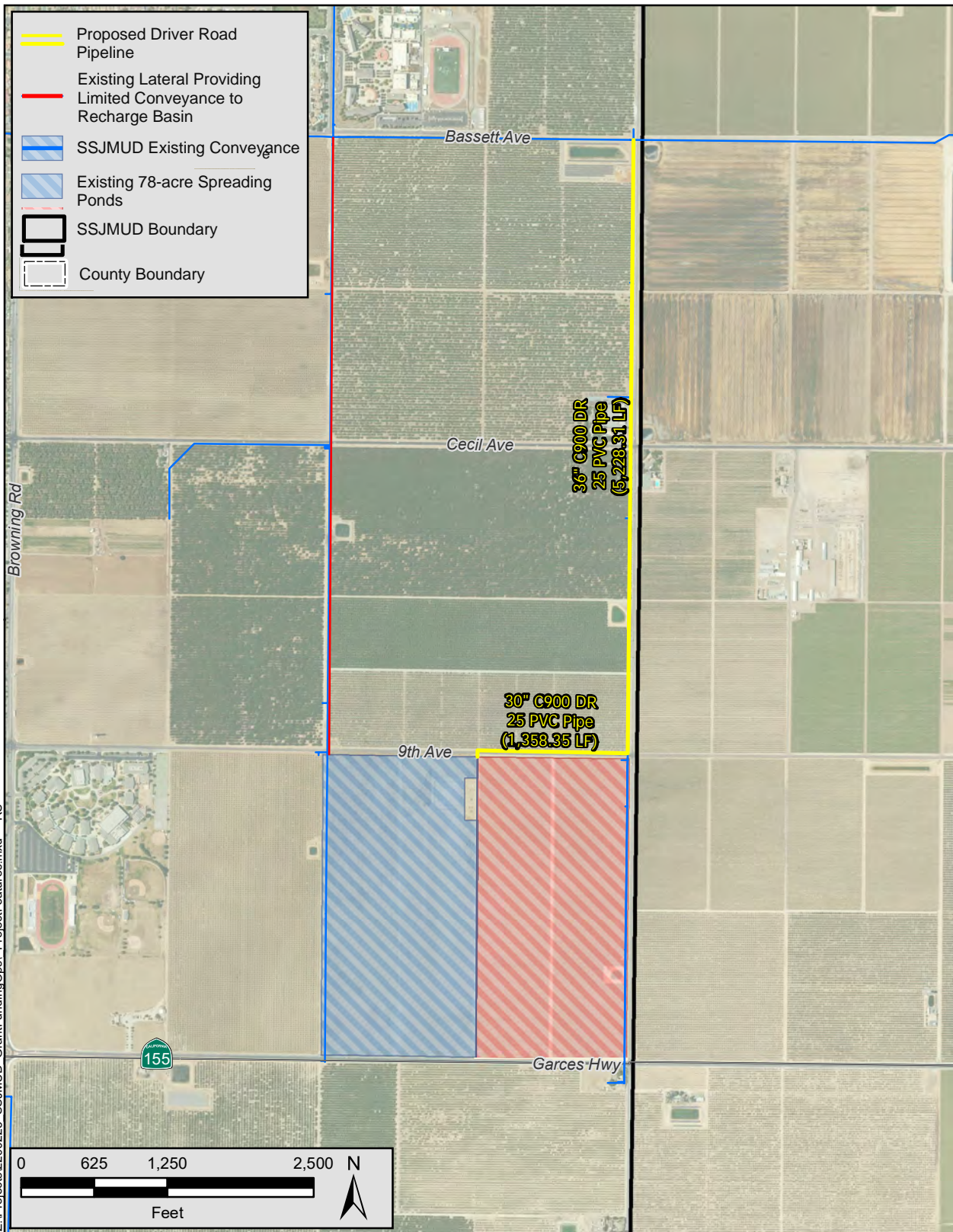


Project Location Within  
SSJMU Boundaries

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**DRAFT**

FIGURE 2



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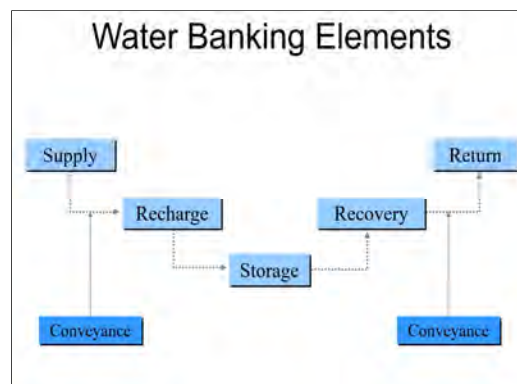


## Project Description

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This Project will establish a more flexible, reliable water supply through the construction of a one-mile pipeline that will increase conveyance capacity to provide increased conveyance to existing District owned recharge ponds and continue to serve irrigation demands. The pipeline will have sufficient capacity to fulfill the irrigation requirements at three turnouts along the conveyance system, as well as the needs for the existing recharge that was constructed in 2022. The Driver Road Pipeline will convey water obtained from the FKC, significantly enhancing water supply reliability and drought resiliency by increasing capacity to capture an additional 4,169 AFY of wet year water for recharge. This increase in conveyance to recharge capacity is essential for addressing the declining groundwater elevations caused by elevated groundwater pumping during drought periods.

A successful recharge site needs several components, available supply, conveyance from the source to the recharge area, and enough area to recharge the supply within the time allowed for recharge. Components of a recharge project are shown in Figure 4. This Driver Pipeline Project will provide the conveyance component to enhance the existing spreading ponds constructed in 2022.



**Figure 4: Components of a Recharge Project**

The Driver Road Pipeline involves the installation of approximately 0.9 miles of 36-inch-diameter pipe along the eastside on Driver Road and 0.25 miles of 30-inch-diameter pipe along the northside on 9th Avenue. The design includes connecting to three existing turnouts and would require crossing Cecil Avenue and Riverside Street. The materials required comprise of 36-inch and 30-inch C900 PVC pipe, tees, elbows, adapters, reducers, 48-inch steel casing at the road crossings, butterfly valves, and couplings. The construction equipment necessary for the project includes front wheel loaders, excavators, 4,000-gallon water trucks, backhoes, forklifts, and dump trucks for soil disposal and construction waste removal.

The primary goal of the Driver Road Pipeline Project is to increase capacity to bring in additional wet year water for recharge. In 2023, abundant rain and snowfall resulted in increased floodwater supplies through the FKC. SSJMUD had the opportunity to capture wet year uncontrolled flows for recharge, but their limited conveyance capacity to the new recharge site restricted them to only capturing a fraction of their recharge potential. The District completed construction of the existing spreading ponds in November, 2022, just prior to the 2023 wet season. Given the FKC was under capacity repair, the District made use of a temporary

connection to an existing 15-inch pipeline lateral to convey water to the spreading site; however, it could only bring in a small amount of floodwater for recharge while satisfying irrigation demands. With the implementation of the Driver Road Pipeline, SSJMUD can meet irrigation demand and maximize recharge capabilities to this new spreading grounds when excess floodwater supplies become available; the Driver Road Pipeline will provide conveyance connection the FKC, and once the FKC conveyance capacity is restored, the full recharge capability of the new spreading grounds will be realized.

## **Performance Measures**

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Measuring the increase in water conveyed through the Driver Road Pipeline is a key performance measure. The performance will be assessed by quantifying water delivered via the 36-inch pipeline to for recharge and comparing it to the temporary conveyance through their existing 15-inch connection. All water brought in by 36-inch pipeline will be measured through a flowmeter, which will be installed by the District as part of their overall measurement of all deliveries within the District. Meters are routinely checked for measurement accuracy per the District's routine maintenance which is described in the District's Agricultural Water Management Plan. The District maintains records of all water supply deliveries conveyed through their distribution system, including any delivery into the existing recharge ponds and any future recharge sites served by the increased capacity of this pipeline.

## Evaluation Criteria

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### Sub-Criterion A1.a: Adds to Available Water Supplies

- **How will the project build long-term resilience to drought? How many years will the project continue to provide benefits?**

The Project will build long term resilience to drought by improving conveyance capacity to bring in wet year water for recharge. Water conveyed by the Driver Road Pipeline will be recharged and later recovered for beneficial use by the district in dry years. Upgrading the temporary connection of the existing 15-inch pipeline to a 36-inch pipeline will increase conveyance capacity and enhance the District's recharge capability through the addition of uncontrolled wet year water that the District would otherwise not be able to access. The increase in conveyance capacity of the Driver Road Pipeline compared to the temporary use of the existing 15-inch connection equates to approximately 4,169 AFY [5,045 AFY- 876 AFY].

The expected operational 'life' of the Project is 50 years. This is the typical timeframe used by various Districts within the Southern San Joaquin Valley to calculate how much they would need in their capital reserve for when it comes time to modify certain components of their water delivery infrastructure.

- **What percentage of the total water supply does the additional water supply represent? How was this estimate calculated?**

The amount conveyed to this direct recharge facility in SSJMUD represents about 6.7 percent (4,169 AFY/ 62,512 AFY) of the ten-year average of delivered surface water supply.

- **What is the estimated quantity of additional supply the project will provide and how was this estimate calculated?**

The Driver Road Pipeline has a conveyance capacity of approximately 35 cubic feet per second (CFS) and will convey during the irrigation shoulder months for approximately 6 months (30 days per month) for a frequency of 4 out of 10 years. This is estimated to be 2,102 AF/month, which equates to an estimated capacity of [2,102 AF/month x 6 months x 4/10 frequency =] 5,045 acre-feet per year (AFY).

The temporary 15-inch connection currently providing limited conveyance to this District recharge site provides a conveyance rate of approximately 6 cfs [15-inch diameter = 1.2 ft<sup>2</sup> (area) x 5 ft/s (velocity) = 6 CFS] during the irrigation shoulder months for approximately 6 months (30 days per month) for a frequency of 4 out of 10 years, estimated at 365 AF/month, which equates to an estimated capacity of [365 AF/month x 6 months x 4/10 frequency=] 876 AFY.

The increased conveyance capacity is a simple calculation comparing the temporary connection to the conveyance capacity of the existing 15-inch pipeline to the 36-inch pipeline. The increased amount equates to approximately 4,169 AFY [5,045 AFY- 876 AFY].

**Provide a qualitative description of the degree/significance of the benefits associated with the additional water supplies.**

The degree and significance of benefits associated with the proposed project is the increase of conveyance capacity for recharge. Project benefits include:

1. Improved Water Flexibility: The increased water conveyance will improve the District's water supply flexibility especially during periods of wet, high demand, and drought. Higher conveyance capacity allows for better control over water distribution, enabling adaptive responses to changing conditions, such as redirecting surface water to increased recharge and adjusting allocation during peak demand or drought.

During the recent 2023 wet year, the region encountered substantial floodwater flows. However, the local infrastructure was unable to efficiently capture and manage these abundant water resources, primarily due to the inadequacy of the existing conveyance capacity. This situation highlighted the District's need for a more flexible and improved conveyance system that could effectively accommodate wet year water flows. With a conveyance capacity of 35 cfs the Driver Road Pipeline increases the District's conveyance system's capacity to efficiently capture flows for recharge while also satisfying irrigation demands.

2. Improved Water Security: The Driver Road Pipeline ensures improved water security as it provides increased capacity to capture unscheduled uncontrolled flood flows. Alongside the contracted water supply, the district has opportunities to receive a portion of the available wet year water approximately 4 out of 10 years from Friant Dam, as part of the safety management of water levels for the dam. The availability of uncontrolled releases during flood events or wet years is estimated by *Historical Records of "Other Water"*, as shown in Appendix C. To facilitate the receipt of uncontrolled releases during wet years, the District must enhance its in-district conveyance to enable effective delivery for recharge.

The District is also preparing for expected increase of contract water deliveries once the FKC is restored in 2024. As previously discussed, the FKC serves as the primary delivery route for SSJMUD's surface water supply. The FKC is a 152-mile canal designed with a maximum capacity of 5,300 cubic feet per second (cfs) to supply conveyance to twenty-six downstream long-term contractors, including SSJMUD. However, maximum capacity has not been fully realized due to various factors such as aged infrastructure, localized seepage through embankments, and regional land subsidence. Through the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project, the Friant Water Authority will restore capacity in a 10-mile portion of the FKC that is scheduled for completion in 2024. Restoration of the canal will lead to increased flows to the District. Hence, increased capacity through the proposed pipeline is needed to capture and accommodate the increased flows resulting from the restoration of the canal.

3. Reduced Groundwater Depletion: In the region where groundwater is an important water source, increased conveyance for recharge from the Project can reduce the reliance on unsustainable groundwater pumping. This can help mitigate negative effects of over-extraction and prevent land subsidence. During drought conditions, the District experiences reduced allocations of Class 1 and Class 2 water supplies. Therefore, local landowners heavily depend on stored groundwater to meet irrigation demands. The Project will conserve groundwater by allowing for an increased delivery of surface water within the District for recharge. Adding conveyance capacity to simultaneously meet

recharge and irrigation demand will help replenish groundwater supplies that will be available to landowners in dry years.

In compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014, SSSJMUD, in conjunction with neighboring districts, has developed a management area plan that focuses on groundwater sustainability in the region. Part of this plan is a series of projects and management actions developed to be implemented by the District to maintain groundwater sustainability. Expanding the conveyance capacity within the District will enable more efficient water transport for recharge of groundwater and significantly support their GSPs long term planning to groundwater sustainability.

Overall, the additional capacity to recharge available surface water supplies positively impact sustainability of the region and enhance the water management capabilities of SSJMUD's system.

### **Sub-Criterion A2: Environmental & Other Benefits**

#### **Sub-Criterion A2.b: Climate Change**

- **In addition to drought resiliency measures, does the proposed project include other natural hazard risk reductions for hazards such as wildfires or floods?**

The Project will provide additional controlled conveyance route for flood flows from the FKC to divert excess water away from vulnerable areas during heavy rainfall events. By delivering excessive water for recharge, the project will divert excess flood water, reducing the risk of flooding downstream of Friant Dam. During heavy flood flows, water can be gradually released into the basin, reducing the volume of flood flows and redirect flows for groundwater recharge. For example, when forecasts predict heavy rainfall, the pipeline's flow can be adjusted to accommodate anticipated inflow. This integrated approach to flood management will minimize flood risks for the surrounding region.

- **Does the proposed project include green or sustainable infrastructure to improve community climate resilience?**

The project will benefit the communities of Delano and McFarland by providing conveyance capacity that will divert flood flows for recharge, reducing flood risks and replenishing groundwater levels. By diverting and storing floodwater flows, the Driver Road Pipeline plays a vital role in protecting local communities from the devastating impact of flooding. Flows will be diverted from the communities populated areas, reducing risk to damage to homes, roads, agricultural fields, and critical infrastructure. This can lead to a significant decrease in the financial and emotional toll on the affected communities, creating a sense of security and stability. Furthermore, the project's impact extends to safeguarding agricultural areas, which are often at-risk during periods of heavy rainfall. By diverting floodwaters away from these regions, the project can protect crops, livestock, and agricultural infrastructure, ensuring food security and supporting the local economies. In addition to protecting agricultural land, the project also helps in preserving critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and other vital structures. By preventing excessive water from causing erosion or structural damage, it ensures the smooth functioning of transportation networks and other essential services.

- **Does the proposed project seek to reduce or mitigate climate pollutions such as air or water pollution?**

The proposed Project aims to increase conveyance for recharge and local landowners, which will offset groundwater pumping. Project implementation will help capture wet year flows that will otherwise be lost outside of the District down the San Joaquin River and to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta if not captured. Conveying uncontrolled releases towards an in-district recharge facility would make the water available for future beneficial use. Recharged water increases groundwater levels which lowers the pumping lift and energy required to return banked water during drought operations, reducing greenhouse gases.

Water quality problems, notably nitrates, arsenic, and TCP contamination, are widespread in the San Joaquin Valley, posing significant risks to drinking and irrigation water. Investing in increased groundwater recharge, is vital to capture more surface water, raise groundwater levels, and enhance water quality by recharging good quality water.

- **Does the proposed project have a conservation or management component that will promote healthy lands and soils or serve to protect water supplies and its associated uses?**

This Project protects water supplies and associated uses by coordinating management of surface water capture and groundwater recharge, thereby boosting overall storage, ensuring a more reliable water supply for crops. This reliability is crucial in maintaining food security and economic stability in the local farming communities. SSJMUD supplies water for local agriculture. The San Joaquin Valley is California's agricultural region and irrigated farming is the region's main economic driver. As local water supplies become limited, stress on the region's water system is growing. In subsequent years, intensive drought has resulted in excessive pumping that has seriously lowered the underlying groundwater table in the District. At present, the District's only source of irrigation water is their surface supply from the Central Valley Project. Capturing un-storable, uncontrolled releases delivered from the FKC is one approach to expand water supplies.

- **Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?**

Implementing projects that promote recharge of groundwater are essential to protect against impacts of climate change. The impact of climate change on agricultural communities have led to a range of challenges that threaten the region's agricultural and disadvantaged communities (DACs). Extreme weather events such as rising temperatures, irregular precipitation and prolonged droughts have caused reduced crop yields, posing a threat to staple crops, and affecting the livelihoods of agricultural communities. The improved water supply reliability resulting from the project will directly enhance climate resilience by ensuring a consistent water source during periods of climate-induced droughts. The proposed project will help mitigate the impacts of droughts by ensuring that groundwater reserves are available, therefore reducing vulnerability to drought. This provides a buffer during periods of drought or water scarcity, offering a reliable water supply even when surface water sources dry up. Agricultural communities can continue to sustain their crops and maintain their livelihoods, mitigating the

adverse effects of climate variability and extreme weather conditions on their farming activities. The availability of groundwater helps to ensure the resilience and stability of agricultural production, safeguarding communities against the economic hardships associated with prolonged droughts.

### **Sub-Criterion A2.b: Environmental Benefits**

- **Does the project seek to improve ecological climate change resiliency of a wetland, river, or stream to benefit to wildlife, fisheries, or habitats? Do these benefits support an endangered or threatened species?**

The FKC serves as a channel for transporting surface water stored in Millerton Lake behind the Friant Dam south to CVP contractors. During peak runoff periods, uncontrolled floodwater is released from Millerton Lake. Improved in-district conveyance will allow SSJMUD to deliver these unscheduled releases for recharge and mitigate flood impacts to downstream users in the San Joaquin River System. Some flood impacts on endangered species in the San Joaquin River system caused by floods include:

1. Disruption of nesting grounds: Floods can wash away or inundate the nesting grounds of endangered species, leading to a decline in their populations.
2. Alteration of river morphology: High-intensity floods can modify the structure of riverbanks and alter the physical characteristics of the river, impacting the habitat of various aquatic species.
3. Changes in water quality and temperature: Floods can lead to changes in water quality and temperature, affecting the survival and reproductive patterns of endangered aquatic species in the San Joaquin River system.
4. Displacement and loss of habitat: Flood events can displace and cause the loss of critical habitats for endangered species, affecting their ability to find food, shelter, and breeding grounds.<sup>1</sup>

By helping to manage flood flows downstream of the Friant Dam, the Project directly contributes to the well-being of the species in the San Joaquin River system and indirectly contributes to the well-being of the species residing in this region.

- **Will the proposed project reduce the likelihood of a species listing or otherwise improve the species status?**

This project is one of many similar projects being implemented throughout the region that together are expected to improve the status of many species by providing increased habitat across the region.

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<sup>1</sup> Elliott L. Matchett, Joseph P. Fleskes. Waterbird Habitat in California's Central Valley Basins Under Climate, Urbanization, and Water Management Scenarios. *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management* 1 June 2018; 9 (1): 75–94. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3996/122016-JFWM-095>

### **Sub-Criterion A2.c: Other Benefits**

- **Will the project assist States and water users in complying with interstate compacts?**

The project directly aligns with the targets and aims of promoting sustainable groundwater outlined in California's SGMA regulations. SGMA's primary focus is to address concerns associated with groundwater depletion, land subsidence, and the deterioration of water quality within the state. By mitigating these challenges, promoting sustainability can help minimize potential conflicts with neighboring states that share the same water sources. This proactive management approach can contribute to a more stable and cooperative relationship between California and its neighboring states regarding water usage.

- **Will the project benefit multiple sectors and/or users (e.g., agriculture, municipal and industrial, environmental, recreation, or others)? Describe the associated sector benefits.**

Implementing a project that increases conveyance to groundwater recharge can have profound benefits for the agriculture sector. Increased recharge enhances availability of water for irrigation during a drought, ensuring a consistent and reliable water source for crops. This reliability protects against crop failures and economic losses during extreme drought driven by climate change. Moreover, the project will reduce dependence on surface water supplies by providing increased groundwater supplies. The recharge acres are in the vicinity of the City of Delano, a DAC with multiple industrial operations within the city's boundaries. Recharging the groundwater near the city enhances the groundwater supply the DAC and industrial operations rely on.

- **Will the project benefit a larger initiative to address sustainability?**

The project will benefit the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a California state-wide initiative. SGMA was implemented to achieve groundwater sustainability by planning and building projects to resolve the challenge of over pumping leading to declining groundwater levels, therefore promoting sustainable groundwater management. The proposed Project focuses on enhancing conveyance towards recharge, directly aligning with SGMA objectives. Increasing groundwater recharge is a critical element in maintaining and restoring groundwater levels. By directing more surface water to recharge basins during wet years, the project will increase the rate of which groundwater is replenished.

SGMA seeks to sustainably balance groundwater recharge and extraction. By increasing conveyance capacity to recharge facilities, the project contributes directly to this goal and is a valuable component of a comprehensive strategy to meet SGMA's sustainability goals and secure the long-term viability of groundwater resources.



- **Will the project help to prevent a water-related crisis or conflict? Is there frequently tension or litigation over water in the basin?**

SSJMUD operates in the Kern Subbasin, classified as critically overdrafted under SGMA law. This law directly relates to the sustainability of the groundwater basin, potentially leading to water-related crises or conflicts. To address this, the district, alongside others in the subbasin, established a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to create and execute a Management Area Plan (MAP) written in conjunction with and in support of a basin-wide Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The plan aims to alleviate groundwater overdraft issues and achieve sustainability by 2040. SSJMUD is currently implementing their GSP in compliance with SGMA and implementing projects that provide supplemental water will directly support the GSP's project and management actions.

### **Evaluation Criterion B—Planning and Preparedness (20 points)**

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- **Explain how the applicable plan addresses drought.**
  - *Does the drought plan contain drought focused elements?*
  - *Describe how the drought plan includes consideration of climate change impacts to water resources or drought.*

SSJMUD is member of the Poso Creek IRWM Group (Group). The Group entered into an agreement with Reclamation in 2019 to develop a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). The plan was approved by Reclamation and adopted in February 2023. The DCP includes a vulnerability assessment included in the plan to assess current and future drought conditions in the Region. The DCP leads to better management of the water resources in the region and to mitigate effects of future drought while accounting for future effects of climate change.

The DCP includes sections on drought monitoring, a vulnerability assessment, mitigation actions, and response actions. Within the plan, Drought Monitoring describes the drought severity level of the Poso Region by assessing three factors: (1) projections of water supply allocations for various sources in the Region such as the Central Valley Water Project, which Group members rely on for surface supplies, (2) minimum thresholds for groundwater level conditions as established in the SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP), and (3) available drought forecasting of hydrologic conditions to define four drought stages. The Vulnerability Assessment evaluates risk and impact of drought to a list of drought vulnerabilities by assessing the availability and reliability of regional water resources, prioritizing critical resources, assessing regional water demand, and considering water quality conditions. The assessment also includes a climate assessment on future conditions based on projected climate change. Mitigation actions were developed for each District in the Poso Creek Region.

This DCP considers climate change by recognizing that droughts are expected to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. It acknowledges that climate change has led to an acceleration of natural climate change due to increased greenhouse gas emissions. The plan also considers climate projections and their potential effects on the region's water supplies. It mentions that climate change models focus on the generalized effects on the region's climate,

such as changes in timing, volume, and nature of precipitation. The plan includes climate change projections for 2030 and 2070, as well as information from the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Update and the Groundwater Sustainability Plan of the Kern Groundwater Authority. The projections show a reduction in volume and reliability of surface water supplies, which will require increased reliance on groundwater to meet irrigation demands. The plan also mentions that mitigation actions have been developed to address drought vulnerabilities caused by climate change, including enhancing conveyance, expanding recharge capacities, and increasing storage of surplus supplies. These mitigation actions aim to increase operational flexibility, reduce reliance on groundwater, and encourage better water management to build long-term drought resilience. Overall, the plan considers climate change by recognizing its impact on water supplies and implementing measures to address its effects.

- **When was the plan developed and how often is it updated?**

The Drought Contingency Plan component in compliance with Reclamation was finalized in 2022 and adopted in early 2023, with an update on an as needed basis, or at least every five years.

- **Was the drought plan developed through a collaborative process?**

- *Describe who was involved in preparing the plan and whether the plan was prepared with input from stakeholders with diverse interests? Describe the process used for interested stakeholders to provide input during the development of the plan.*
- *If the plan was prepared by an entity other than the applicant describe whether and how the applicant was involved in the development of the plan. If the applicant was not involved in the development, explain why.*

The Poso Creek DCP was developed in collaboration with other members of the Group. Table 3 lists the member agencies of the IRWM group. Planning of the DCP occurred in two phases in accordance with USBR's Drought Response Program Framework (Framework). During Phase I of the Planning Process, a Drought Task Force was established by Poso Creek group members and various stakeholder, including SSJMUD, to develop the Final DCP and carry out action developed under the Communication and Outreach Plan. The C&O Plan identifies a plan to conduct stakeholder meetings and includes public/stakeholder input for work to be conducted under the DCP.

The development of the Poso Creek DCP and the district-specific portions of the DCP will also consider drought monitoring and response actions identified in the Groundwater GSPs prepared for compliance with California's SGMA. The elements of the DCP include:

1. **Drought monitoring** for predicting the probability of future droughts or confirming an existing drought and implementing appropriate response actions.
2. **Vulnerability assessment** to evaluate risks and impacts of drought to critical resources and the factors contributing to those risks.
3. **Mitigation actions** (drought resiliency actions) that will build long-term resiliency to drought and mitigate risks posed by drought.

4. **Response actions** that can be quickly implemented during specific stages of a drought, manage the limited supply, and decrease the severity of immediate impacts.
5. **Operational and administrative framework** to identify who is responsible for actions necessary to implement each element of the DCP.
6. **Plan update process** to monitor, evaluate, and update the DCP.

The Project provides SSJMUD recharge continuity and additional conveyance capacity by way of capturing wet year, un-storable, uncontrolled releases of CVP water into storage using recharge basins. Later, during dry and critical year type, the stored water is pumped from the aquifer for piped delivery to in-district irrigation distribution systems to meet irrigation demand.

**Table 3. Poso Creek RWMG Member Agencies**

<b>Member Agencies</b>	
Semitropic Water Storage District (SWSD)	North Kern Water Storage District (NKWSD)
Cawelo Water District (CWD)	Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District (SWID)
Kern-Tulare Water District (KTWD)	Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District (DEID)
Northwest Kern Resource Conservation District (NWKRCDD)	Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District (SSJMUD)

- **Describe how your proposed drought resiliency project is supported by an existing drought plan.**

SSJMUD collaborated with other members of the Poso Creek Group to highlight critical drought vulnerabilities in their region. Relevant sections of the DCP are included in Appendix A. The core goal of the Plan is to build long-term drought resiliency for the region in advance of a drought crisis. The projects seeks to address the plans main goals to (1) enhance reliability and effectiveness of surface water supplies delivered to the Region (2) Improve regional water conveyance, direct recharge, and in-lieu service actions and (3) Improve effectiveness of water delivery. To achieve the goal the plan, each District in the RWMG has identified mitigation actions and prioritized those that would maximize the regions capacity to recharge and bank water locally during wet periods. In support of this effort, SSJMUD developed proposed projects and response actions for long term drought planning. The DCP aims to enhance conveyance to expand recharge capacities and improving conjunctive water use in the region. Projects such as the Driver Road Pipeline would improve in-district conveyance capacity for recharge, directly supporting the Plans long term planning effort.

## **Evaluation Criterion C—Severity of Actual or Potential Drought or Water Scarcity Impacts to be addressed by the Project (15 points)**

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- **Describe recent, existing, or potential drought or water scarcity conditions in the project area.**

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor information, the most recent and severe drought Kern County faced, which is the area in which the District is located, was from 2014-2016 with “Exceptional Drought” conditions all three years. In Figure 5, the 2022 Drought Monitor map of California shows the Kern County area being in “Extreme Drought” and with variable conditions from “Moderate Drought to “Severe Drought” observed in the past year. Although drought conditions have decreased in recent years, projected climate change estimates by the U.S. Global Change Research Program indicate that drought conditions will only become more frequent and severe.<sup>1</sup> Climate models project that if global emissions of greenhouse gases continue to grow, summertime temperatures in the United States that ranked among the hottest 5% in 1950-1979 will occur at least 70% of the time by 2035-2064. Heavy precipitation events will likely be more frequent, with heavy downpours that currently occur about once every 20 years are projected to occur between twice and five times as frequently by 2100.<sup>2</sup>

The state and region have experienced a historic drought from 2013 to 2022. During drought conditions, SSJMUD and other Friant CVP contractors received up to 20% of their allocation. The recent severity of water scarcity is demonstrated by comparing the average FKC deliveries to SSJMUD for the 10-year period from 2013 through 2022 (the last complete calendar year) to the preceding 20-year period (1993-2012). The 2013-2022 calendar year average annual deliveries to SSJMUD were 62,512 acre-feet compared to 106,933 acre-feet for the period 1993-2012, a reduction of 42 percent. Despite this large reduction over a 10-year period, three years (2017-2019) in the center of the period average FKC deliveries of 105,108 acre-feet, demonstrated the large swings in precipitation seen in recent years. In two of those years, un-storable, uncontrolled releases were available that SSJMUD could have recharged if the recharge basins and high-capacity conveyance had been available. During these conditions, growers within the District must then rely on groundwater to meet their crop irrigation demands, which has caused a large decline in groundwater levels. While they have not yet reached a condition where the District would have to take action to fallow land and implement other water conservation measures, continued groundwater pumping without the ability to replenish extracted water is not sustainable over the long-term.

California has experienced record precipitation in 2023, reducing the drought conditions to “Abnormally Dry” or “None”, see Figure 6. Despite recent rain events, the state remains cautiously aware of the threat of prolonged drought conditions. While the increased rainfall and snowfall have provided temporary relief to water reservoirs and ecosystems, it's essential to recognize that due to climate change California's hydroclimate is historically prone to extended periods of drought. Climate change projections suggest a future with more frequent and severe drought events.

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<sup>2</sup> Melillo, Jerry M., Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohe, Eds., 2014: Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment. U.S. Global Change Research Program, 841 pp. doi:10.7930/J0Z31WJ2

Due to these varying climate conditions, California continues to prepare and plan for a future that includes the potential for recurring water shortages, emphasizing the importance of water conservation, sustainable resource management, and resilient infrastructure to navigate the challenges posed by an uncertain condition.

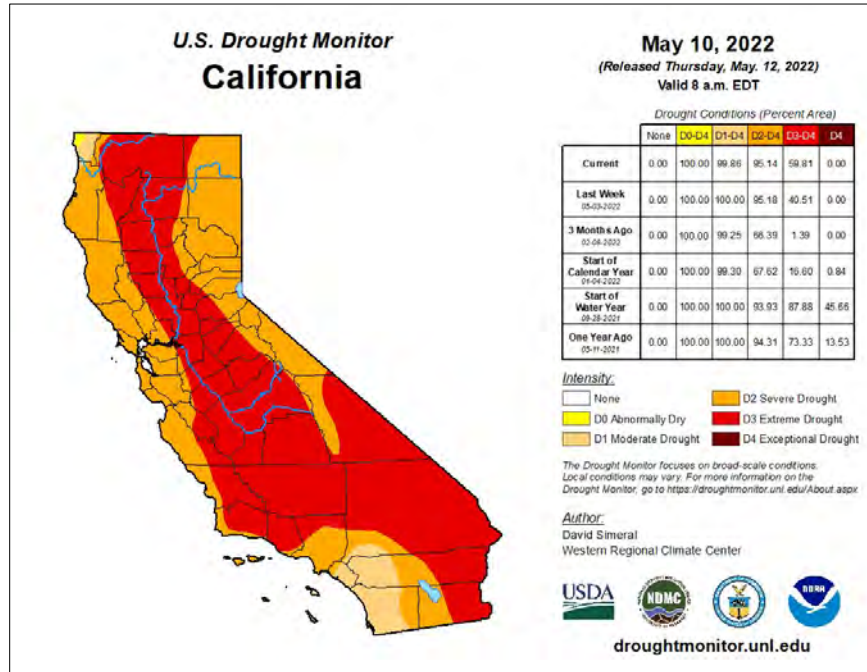


Figure 5: U.S. Drought Monitor Map 2022

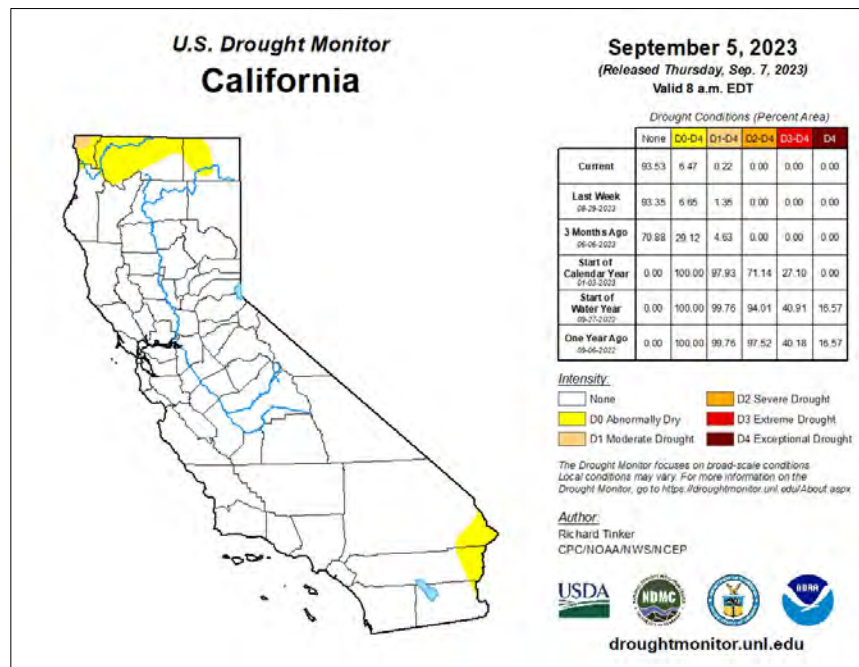


Figure 6: U.S. Drought Monitor Map 2023

- **What are the ongoing or potential drought or water scarcity impacts to specific sectors in the project area if no action is taken (e.g., impacts to agriculture, environment, hydropower, recreation, tourism, forestry, etc.), and how severe are those impacts?**

In the preparation of its SGMA-compliant Management Area Plan (SSJMUD, 2020) as part of the Kern Groundwater Authority's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (KGA GSP) (KGA, 2020), SSJMUD identified that a "no projects" condition in the District would lead to a projected continued groundwater overdraft. Without any groundwater recharge in the District, SSJMUD is projected to experience annual groundwater overdraft ranging from 400 AF to 18,000 AF; this value in any given year is dependent on the water year type.

The primary industry in the project area is agriculture with permanent tree crops, such as deciduous fruits and nuts, and grapes. If no projects are built, then the District would be required to fallow land to address the projected overdraft. With an average annual consumptive use of applied water of 3 AF/acre, SSJMUD would be required to take anywhere between 134 acres to 6,000 acres out of production.

In addition to the direct negative impacts to irrigated agriculture in the District, if no projects are undertaken, additional impacts will be realized by the cities in the form of increase pumping costs due to declining groundwater levels. Private water wells used to supply domestic water to homes in rural portions of the District would be more severely impacted by declining groundwater levels than the cities' supply wells because rural domestic wells are typically drilled to shallower depths than municipal or agricultural supply wells.

## **Evaluation Criterion D—Presidential and DOI Priorities (15 points)**

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### **Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities**

In the surrounding area decreases in groundwater levels typically result in an increase in pumping costs. As the groundwater levels decline, the pumping equipment needs to extract water from greater depths. This increased pumping depth results in higher energy consumption, leading to elevated electricity or fuel costs for operating the pumps. Additionally, the decline in groundwater levels often causes a reduction in well efficiency, necessitating repairs or adjustments to the pumping infrastructure, which can incur additional maintenance costs. The need for more powerful pumps or additional wells to meet water demands exacerbates the overall operational costs, impacting the financial burden of landowners that depend on well water supplies.

The project will in-directly benefit the adjacent cities of McFarland and Delano because in-district groundwater banking activities and increased importation of surface supply for direct recharge and for agricultural use will conserve groundwater and maintain groundwater levels. With the District managing higher groundwater levels and increasing the groundwater storage groundwater quality is improved. The City of Delano is also a supportive stakeholder of the Project due to its significant contribution to groundwater sustainability, which is a critical concern for its community that heavily relies on groundwater resources. This Project ensures a more secure and reliable source of water for their residents, thereby reinforcing our community's resilience during drought.

The Cities of Delano and McFarland are classified by the State of California as Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDAC). A SDAC is a community whose MHI is less than 60% the statewide MHI. As of 2021, the statewide MHI in California was \$ 84,097; therefore, the threshold for classification as a SDAC in 2021 was \$50,458. According to the US Census Bureau, the City of Delano's MHI was \$48,344 in 2021; McFarland's was \$36,586.

## **Evaluation Criterion E—Readiness to Proceed and Project Implementation (10 points)**

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- **Describe the implementation plan of the proposed project.**

The Project will be implemented through a structure based on project milestones. Seven tasks are defined below to accomplish the Project work and are organized to parallel to Budget and Schedule items.

Task 1: Grant Administration - Activities include coordination of all Project activities, including budget, schedule, communication, and grant and cost-share administration including preparation of invoices and maintenance of financial records.

Task 2: Project Reporting - Reports on the Project financial status will be submitted on a semiannual basis over the two-year period. A Final Project Report will be prepared upon Project completion.

Task 3: Project Design – The District has decided on the final alignment since all utility locations are confirmed. All design work is anticipated to be completed in 2024, prior to the start of construction.

Task 4: Environmental Documentation and Regulatory Compliance –An environmental document that meets the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be prepared for the Project. For the NEPA environmental compliance work, SSJMUD proposes to work with the NEPA Reclamation team to determine what level of NEPA is required, including a Categorical Exclusion Checklist or an Environmental Assessment Document. For both efforts, SSJMUD will retain a consultant to help prepare the appropriate document, including conducting cultural and biological surveys to support the CEQA and NEPA document. Prior to commencing earth-disturbing activities, SSJMUD will complete pre-activity biological surveys by a qualified biologist and participate in an Awareness Program that describes habitats within the project area.

Task 5: Permits and Approvals - It is noted that the District is not subject to the County’s or City’s jurisdiction with regard to building and grading permits relative to water resource projects. However, it is anticipated that County encroachment permits for construction within the County road right-of-way will be obtained as needed. Construction may also require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) and a PM-10 Dust Control Permit

Task 6: Project Construction - The proposed Project 6,588 LF of C900 pipeline. Construction of a pipeline involves trench excavation, bedding preparation, pipeline placement, backfilling, compaction, and the installation of valves and fittings to regulate water flow. Pressure testing is conducted to verify the pipeline's integrity, followed by site restoration to ensure minimal environmental impact.

Task 7: Construction Management and Administration – Construction Management and Administration involves everything from the advertisement for bids from qualified construction firms to filing a Notice of Completion for the Project works and review of “As-Builts” drawings. Construction management activities can generally be categorized as field observation and



contract administration, whereas construction administration includes items such as the Notice to Proceed, pre-construction conference, correspondence with the Contractor, submittal review, progress payments, periodic meetings with the Contractor, Contract Change Orders, etc.

The proposed Project will be implemented under the direction of District Manager, Roland Gross. A consultant will provide design, construction management, administrative, reporting assistance, and coordination with local firms, as needed. Operations Manager, John Bonkosky will have responsibility for overall Project Management.

The District will work with the USBR to address any environmental compliance or planning documentation, while adhering to project reporting and update requirements as defined in the potential grant agreement. Any necessary permits and approvals will be obtained prior to the start of construction activities. A Grant Schedule estimating the phases and milestones for completion of the work is shown in Table 4. Project tasks and durations are based on previous engineering experience.

**Table 4. Project Schedule/Milestones**

Milestone	Duration (days)	Start	Finish
Signed Agreement	1	10/31/2024	10/31/2024
Task 1- Grant Administration	607	10/31/2024	6/30/2026
Task 2- Project Reporting	607	10/31/2024	6/30/2026
Task 3- Project Design	61	10/31/2024	12/30/2024
Task 4- Environmental Documentation	181	01/01/2025	6/30/2025
Task 5- Permits and Approvals	45	6/30/2025	8/14/2025
Task 6- Project Construction	197	9/1/2025	3/30/2026
Task 7- Construction Management and Administration	289	9/14/2025	6/30/2026

- **Describe any permits or approvals that will be required (e.g., water rights, water quality, stormwater, or other regulatory clearances).**

As described in Task 5, It is anticipated that no regulatory permits will be required, since the work will be performed on previously and actively disturbed District land. In this regard, only permits related to construction may be required such as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a PM-10 Dust Control Permit. It is anticipated that County encroachment permits for construction within the County road right-of-way will be obtained as needed

- **Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project.**

The District has contracted an engineering design consultant for the design of the connections, pipeline, and turnouts. The Driver Road Pipeline design is currently at 90%

completion. The alignment of the pipeline is complete with consideration of utilities cleared and permits identified to be obtained.

- **Describe any land purchases that must occur before the project can be implemented.**

No land purchase or additional rights-of-way is required for the Project as it will be constructed with District's boundaries and ownership.

- **Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.**

The District's banking agreement has already been established and the pipeline proposed for construction is a new connection to the existing mainline, as such, no new policies or administrative actions are required to implement this Project.

### **Evaluation Criterion F—Nexus to Reclamation (5 points)**

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- **Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation?**

Yes, the District was formed for the purpose of entering into a contract for purchase and distribution of water from the Central Valley Project (CVP). SSJMUD is a registered CVP contractor and receives both Class-1 and Class-2 allocations of 142,000 AF through the FKC.

- **Will the proposed work benefit a Reclamation project area or activity?**

The Driver Road Pipeline project will have a direct positive impact on the District, as it will provide increased capacity to their system for the redirection of high-flow releases during wet years for recharge purposes while meeting the irrigation season demands. Moreover, this Project will support all local Friant-CVP contractors. The significant decline in the Friant-Kern Canal's conveyance capability, resulting from the effects of excessive groundwater extraction, has led to unstable deliveries of surface water. By supporting groundwater recharge through the Driver Road Pipeline, the project aims to mitigate subsidence issues, which will support all the Friant CVP contractors.

- **Is the applicant a Tribe?**

No, the applicant is a municipal utility water district.

### **Evaluation Criterion G – Stakeholder Support for Proposed Project (5 Points)**

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- **Describe the level of stakeholder support for the proposed project. Are letters of support from stakeholders provided? Are any stakeholders providing support for the project through cost-share contributions or through other types of contributions to the project?**

- **Explain whether the project is supported by a diverse set of stakeholders, as appropriate, given the types of interested stakeholders within the project area and the scale, type, and complexity of the proposed project.**

As previously mentioned, SSJMUD is a member of the Poso Creek IRWM Group, which consists of multiple neighboring water districts in Kern County. The proposed Project, which is included in the latest update of the Poso Creek IRWM Plan, plays a crucial role in enhancing the efficient delivery of surface supplies to a recharge basin and improving operational flexibility and efficiency within the region. This Project reflects extensive planning and dedicated efforts, aligning with the overarching objectives of the IRWM Group and demonstrating the IRWM Program's emphasis on integrated planning for regional sustainability. Furthermore, the Project has also been recognized within the region's DCP. Appendix B contains a Letter of Support from the Group, further endorsing this initiative.

The City of Delano is also a supportive stakeholder of the Project due to its significant contribution to groundwater sustainability, which is a critical concern for its community that heavily relies on groundwater resources. This Project ensures increased capacity to be directed for recharge, the supplemental groundwater supplies will provide a more secure and reliable source of water for their residents, thereby reinforcing our community's resilience during drought. The Project's objectives and benefits directly align with the interests of both agricultural and municipal sectors. Appendix B contains a Letter of Support from the City of Delano, advocating in support of the Project.

## Project Budget

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The mandatory Budget Narrative and Budget Detail are uploaded into Grants.gov with the submission of this application. A summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. —Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources**

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Non-Federal Entities	
1. Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District	\$2,169,565
<i>Non-Federal Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$2,165,565</i>
<b>Requested Reclamation Funding:</b>	<b>\$2,165,565</b>
<b><i>Total Project Funding:</i></b>	<b>\$4,339,130</b>

## **Budget Narrative**

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The total Project budget for the Driver Road Pipeline (Project) is estimated at \$4,339,130 with \$2,169,565 in requested grant funds (Federal Cost Share) and \$2,169,565 in Non-Federal Cost Share funds. The approach has been reflected in the budget estimates. The total requested grant funds amount to about 50 percent of total project costs, with the remainder (50 percent) funded by the Applicant.

The following section describes the budget items identified in the Budget Proposal and the basis of which each amount was determined.

### **a. Salaries and Wages**

Salaries and Wages of District staff are not factored into the Budget Proposal. Any time spent by District personnel in support of the Project will be covered as part of their district responsibilities, accounted for internally, and not invoiced to the Project.

### **b. Fringe Benefits**

No Fringe Benefits are included in the Budget Proposal.

### **c. Travel**

No Travel is included in the Budget Proposal.

### **d. Equipment**

No Equipment is included in the Budget Proposal.

### **e. Supplies**

No Supplies are included in the Budget Proposal.

### **f. Contractual**

The budget proposal consists of two contracts: one for an engineering consultant, and one for construction.

#### *Engineering Consultant*

The Engineering Consultant will provide assistance with project administration, grant reporting, environmental compliance, and permits-approvals. The Budget Detail provides a breakdown of estimated hours by rate for anticipated staff for each task. For cost estimating purposes, it was assumed that the Project will require the same effort as a past comparable project.

Grant Administration includes coordination of all Project activities, such as budget and schedule; coordination with Reclamation; and cost administration. Grant reporting includes providing required progress, final, and financial reports. Environmental and Regulatory Compliance will include coordination with Reclamation to prepare of all necessary environmental documentation.

A rate sheet of District Rates and Engineering Consultant's Fee schedule is provided in the Budget Detail. Hourly breakdown of scope of work is based on the level of effort required on past comparable projects and the District's experience on projects of similar levels of effort. The

District maintains a Purchasing Policy. An hourly breakdown for the estimates provided for each item is included in the Budget Detail.

### ***Construction***

#### ***Engineering Consultant***

The Engineering Consultant will be contracted for environmental and regulatory design, bidding, and construction management. As required for the Project, CEQA and NEPA environmental compliance will be obtained prior to any ground disturbance activity by a consultant and are included the contract. The Budget Detail upload to grants.gov provides a breakdown of estimated hours by rate for anticipated staff for each task. For cost estimating purposes, it was assumed that the Project will require the same effort as a past comparable project.

Design Support will include completion of Final Design and pre-award costs on Design from Engineering Consultant staff charged between August 7,2023 to September 29,2023. Costs for design based on the level of effort required on past comparable projects and the District's experience on projects of similar levels of effort. Construction Bidding includes preparation of specifications and drawings, coordination of the bid process, bid proposal analysis, and contract award assistance. Construction Management will include oversight of construction and progress payment support. Permitting and Approval Processing includes preparing and compiling all necessary permit application documents, including forms, drawings, technical reports, and supporting documentation. The Budget Detail provides a breakdown of estimated hours by rate for anticipated staff.

#### ***Construction Contract***

It is anticipated that a single "furnish and install" contract will be awarded for all elements of construction, including mobilization, demobilization, water supply, traffic control, turnout connections, jack and bore crossing, materials and supplies, equipment, and required construction specific permits.

The estimate for Project Wide Items provided in the Construction Components are based on the bid abstracts from the comparable Shafter Wasco Irrigation District's Bell Pipeline project contract, the North Kern Water Storage District's NK-619 project contract and proposals from suppliers. The estimate for Pipeline Construction is based on the bid abstract from the comparable projects.

This cost is determined to be fair and reasonable as it is based on a contract of a similar nature that was awarded through a public, competitive bidding process. An Engineer's Opinion of Cost (EOPC) estimate was provided by an engineering consultant and can be found in the Budget Detail.

#### ***Other Construction-related Costs:***

The budget includes costs for construction- related permits required by law such as PM-10 Dust Control Permit, and Kern County/Fish & Wildlife Permit. The estimate is based on the permitting costs for a similar project completed last year.

### **g. Other Expenses**

No Other Expenses are included in the Budget Proposal.

### **h. Indirect Costs**

No Indirect Costs are included in the Budget Proposal.



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Maribel G. Reyna  
CITY MANAGER

October 17, 2023

Roland Gross  
General Manager  
Southern San Joaquin MUD  
P.O. Box 279  
Delano, CA 93216

**RE: Letter of Support for *Driver Road Pipeline (Project)***

Dear Grant Review Committee:

The City of Delano is writing to express strong support for the Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District's proposed, *Driver Road Pipeline (Project)*. Please accept this letter of support in favor of the application for funds from the Bureau of Reclamation.

The City of Delano acknowledges and supports SSJMUD's initiative, aiming to secure funding for the enhancement of sustainable groundwater recharge through conveyance improvements to local recharge basins. SSJMUD's proposed Project under your consideration will help continued avoidance of drought vulnerability while also providing multiple benefits to improve and support local management of groundwater supply and quality to our region.

As a State designated disadvantaged community (DAC), the effect this grant funding will have on City of Delano is profound. I support the State prioritizing DAC projects, like this one, where additional resources will have the biggest impact.

For these reasons, I fully support the *Driver Road Pipeline* grant application, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 661-720-2269.

Sincerely,

Maribel Reyna, City Manager  
City of Delano



POSO CREEK IRWMP

Management Group

1101 Central Avenue, Wasco, CA 93280  
661-758-5113

Mr. Roland Gross  
General Manager  
Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District  
11281 Garzoli Ave, Delano, CA 93215

Re: Letter of Support for Driver Road Pipeline Project

Dear Mr. Gross,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Group to express our strong support for the Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District's (SSJMUD) *Driver Road Pipeline Project* (Project). SSJMUD's efforts to enhance drought resiliency by effectively conveying flood flows for surface water recharge align with our shared objectives.

Implementation of this Project offers significant benefits as it will enable the capture of available surface water supply for recharge and future recovery during dry periods. Additionally, this project will enhance the flexibility of timing for Central Valley Project (CVP) deliveries from the Friant-Kern Canal, thereby improving operational adaptability in the region.

The Poso Creek IRWM Group is highly supportive of the *Driver Road Pipeline Project*. We recognize that it will significantly boost groundwater recharge and sustainability within the region, directly aligning with our Drought Contingency Plan's (DCP) objectives to enhance water supply reliability and facilitate conjunctive use efforts in line with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Our support for this project highlights its potential to benefit not only our group but also SSJMUD and others within the region.

We hope that our endorsement can be supportive in your efforts to secure grant funding to advance this project. Should the funding agency wish to discuss our interest and support, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Kris Lawrence  
Chairman, Poso Creek IRWM Group  
[klawrence@swid.org](mailto:klawrence@swid.org)  
(661) 758-5369