

January 1, 2015

## IMPORTANT NOTICE-PLEASE READ!

### ATTENTION: All Applicants for Development Permits

As of January 1, 2015, the State of California (per Senate Bill 1535) has imposed an increased fee on the filing of environmental documentation to fund programs for the State Department of Fish and Game and has eliminated the use of a fee exemption (known as a "Di Minius Finding") that the City could issue. These fees affect all development projects (i.e. General Plan Amendments, Annexations, Tentative Subdivision Maps, Zone Changes, Conditional Use Permits, etc.) that require an environmental determination per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Please refer to the State's website for more details: [http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/ceqa/ceqa\\_changes.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/ceqa/ceqa_changes.html)

The increased fees are as follows:

<b>CEQA Document</b>	<b>Fee Effective Jan. 1, 2015</b>
Negative Declaration (ND)	\$2,210.00
Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)	\$2,210.00
Environmental Impact Report	\$3,069.75
County Clerk Processing Fee (Required in addition for all projects above)	\$50
Categorical Exemption (Projects that qualify are spelled out in CEQA)	\$50

After the final approval of a project by the Planning Commission or City Council, a Notice of Determination (NOD) or a Notice of Exemption (NOE) is filed with the County Clerk's office to finalize the environmental determination (negative declaration, EIR, etc.) made by the City and to limit the time frame for the filing of CEQA lawsuits. This NOD/NOE must be filed within 5 days of the final approval. For many years, the City of Merced has been collecting a filing fee at the time of application (currently \$50) via a check made out to the "Merced County Clerk's Office" to complete these required filings.

However, due to the need for a substantially increased fee, project applicants will now be asked to forward these fees to the City Planning Staff at a later date after staff has determined the level of environmental review your project will require. The fees will still need to be collected prior to the final action of the Planning Commission or City Council in order to meet the 5-day filing time frame after the project is approved. (If your project is denied, the fee will be refunded.)

Exemptions from these fees can only be granted by the State Department of Fish and Game (DFG) if they determine that a project "will have no effect on fish and wildlife." The project applicant can contact the DFG per the information on their website and ask for such a determination, but the DFG estimates that only 5 percent of projects statewide would qualify. The City of Merced CANNOT issue such an exemption, only the DFG.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in the above manner. Please understand that this is NOT a new City or County fee, but a fee imposed by the State of California, with which the City is obligated to comply. If you have any questions, please contact the City of Merced Planning staff at (209) 385-6858.

Sincerely,

Kim Espinosa  
Planning Manager