

## Notice of Determination

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**To:**

Office of Planning and Research  
[CEQA Submit](#)  
For U.S. Mail:  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

*Street Address:*

1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**From:**

Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Central Region  
1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710  
Contact: Mindy Trask  
Phone: (559) 939-0282



**Lead Agency:**

California Department of Transportation  
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726  
Contact: Jennifer Taylor  
Email: [jennifer.taylor@dot.ca.gov](mailto:jennifer.taylor@dot.ca.gov)  
Phone: (558) 287-9844

**SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21108**

**State Clearinghouse Number:** 1999111063

**Project Title:** State Route 156 Castroville Boulevard Interchange Project (California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2021-068-04 (ITP))

**Project Location:** The State Route 156 Castroville Boulevard Interchange Project (Project) is located on State Route (SR) 156 at the intersection with Castroville Boulevard, between postmiles 1.4 and PM 2.1, within Monterey County. The Project also includes a wetland mitigation site located at the Elkhorn Highlands Reserve approximately 4 miles northeast of the City of Castroville and an amphibian mitigation site located at the North Monterey County High School approximately 0.25 miles north of the Castroville Boulevard/SR 156 interchange, surrounding the North Monterey County High School.

**Project Description:** The Project will replace the existing at-grade signalized intersection on SR 156 West at Castroville Boulevard with a new grade-separated interchange, an alignment shift, roundabouts bike lanes, and frontage roads. The Project includes off-site mitigation for Project impacts to wetlands and off-site mitigation for Project impacts to protected amphibians.

The Project is expected to result in permanent loss of approximately 5.6 acres of upland habitat for California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*, CTS) and Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*, SCLTS) (collectively, the Covered Species) and temporary construction impacts to a total of approximately 31.6 acres of Covered Species habitat. The Project will also result in approximately 50 acres of temporary impacts to Covered Species habitat in association with off-site mitigation activities, including habitat restoration. The Project is expected to result in incidental take of CTS, which is designated as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act, and SCLTS, which is designated as an endangered under the California Endangered Species Act and as a Fully Protected Species under Fish and Game Code section 5050.

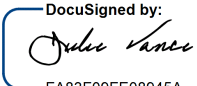
The ITP referenced above as issued by CDFW authorizes incidental take of species listed under CESA that may occur as a result of Project implementation. Incidental take of SCLTS may be authorized pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081.5. Additionally, Senate Bill 147 has been enacted to add section 2081.15 to the Fish and Game Code to allow CDFW to authorize the take of a fully protected species in subdivision (b) of section 5050 resulting from impacts attributable to the implementation of a maintenance, repair, or improvement project to critical regional or local water agency infrastructure if the conditions set forth in Fish and Game Code section 2081.15, subdivisions (a-c) are met (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 783.4, and Senate Bill No. 1231, stats. 2000).

To meet the requirements of 2081(b) and 2081.5, approximately 43 acres of high-quality habitat for the Covered Species will be enhanced and perpetually conserved. Conservation and enhancement of these specific lands have been identified as the highest priority action in the Mojo Cojo Area of the SCLTS Elkhorn metapopulation. These conservation lands will also help provide an important link between protected CDFW lands. The Project also includes amphibian crossing structures that will improve SCLTS movement and overall connectivity from one side of SR 156 to the other. The Permittee will also be conducting post construction effectiveness monitoring of the amphibian crossing structures, as well as on the conservation lands.

**Notice of Determination**

This is to advise that CDFW, acting as [ the lead agency /  a responsible agency] approved the above-described Project on 3/18/2024, and made the following determinations regarding the above-described Project:

- 1. The Project [ will /  will not] have a significant effect on the environment (This determination is limited to effects within CDFW's permitting jurisdiction as a responsible agency).
  - 2.  An environmental impact report /  A negative declaration was prepared by the lead agency for the original project.
  - 3. Additional mitigation measures [ were /  were not] made a condition of CDFW's approval of the project.
  - 4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [ was /  was not] adopted by CDFW for this project.
  - 5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations [ was /  was not] adopted by CDFW for this project.
  - 6. Findings [ were /  were not] made by CDFW pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21081(a).
  - 7. Compliance with the environmental filing fee requirement at Fish and Game Code § 711.4 (check one):
    - Payment is submitted with this notice.
    - A copy of a receipt showing prior payment was submitted to CDFW.
- Responsible Agency statement: The Final Environmental Impact Report prepared by the lead agency for the Project is available to the general public at the office location listed above for the lead agency. CDFW's administrative record of proceedings related to the incidental take permit is available to the public for review at CDFW's regional office.

DocuSigned by:  
  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/18/2024  
FA03F09FE00945A...  
 Julie A. Vance, *Regional Manager*

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_