

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street, MS-48  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Project Applicant:** BHER Minerals, LLC

**Project Title:** Salton Sea Geothermal Lithium Recovery Demonstration Project

**Project Location – Specific:** 6922 Crummer Rd

**Project Location – City:** Calipatria 92233

**Project Location – County:** Imperial

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

CalEnergy Operating Corporation (CalEnergy) will conduct a pilot test to demonstrate the feasibility of technologies to extract lithium from geothermal brine that is produced at its geothermal facilities. The technology proposed for testing will process 100 gallons per minute of geothermal brine. In the first phase of the lithium extraction process, referred to as the "pre-treatment" section of the unit, calcium hydroxide (which is already in use at the facility as lime) is used to condition brine prior to routing the brine to the lithium extraction process. The lithium extraction process then employs inert resin beads manufactured by Lilac Solutions to extract the lithium chloride from the brine. The lithium extraction unit uses hydrochloric acid (which is also currently used at the facility), along with power and water utilities, in order to accomplish the extraction process. After extraction of lithium chloride from the brine, the post-extraction brine streams are returned to the current brine processing system, which results in the test essentially being minor treatment of a small side-stream of brine.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** California Energy Commission

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** BHER Minerals, LLC

**Exempt Status:** *(check one)*

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number  
Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15306
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number.
- Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, §15061(b)(3))

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The pilot project includes activities of taking geothermal brine and processing it for lithium extraction. These activities will not affect any functions of the geothermal plant. Also, the project will include basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities, which should not result in major disturbance to environmental resources.

**Lead Agency**

**Contact Person:** Katharina Gerber **Area code/Telephone/Ext:** 916-327-2201

**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

**Signature:** Katharina Gerber **Date:** 6/17/20 **Title:** CAM

**Signed by Responsible Agency**

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**Signed by Lead Agency**

**Jun 17 2020**

**Signed by Applicant**

**Date received for filing at OPR:** STATE CLEARINGHOUSE