

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

To: Governor's Office of Planning and Research - State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth St, Suite 222 Sacramento, CA 95814-5502	From: South Coast Air Quality Management District 21865 Copley Drive Diamond Bar, CA 91765
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Project Title: Attainment Plan for 2006 24-Hour PM2.5 Standard for the South Coast Air Basin

Project Location: The project is located in the four-county South Coast Air Basin portion of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) jurisdiction. The South Coast Air Basin includes all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The South Coast Air Basin (Basin) is designated as a Serious nonattainment area for the 2006 24-hour PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (standard). The United States Environmental Protection Agency issued a final determination that the Basin failed to achieve the standard (35 micrograms per cubic meter) by the December 31, 2019 attainment deadline triggering the requirement for the South Coast AQMD to revise its State Implementation Plan by December 31, 2020. To demonstrate how attainment of the standard will be achieved, South Coast AQMD has developed an attainment plan for the Basin which addresses directly-emitted PM2.5 and PM2.5 precursors (e.g., nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur oxides (SOx), volatile organic compounds (VOC), and ammonia) by: 1) updating the 2018 base year and 2023 future year emission inventories; 2) demonstrating a five percent annual reduction of NOx emissions based on continued implementation of existing regulations; 3) updating the air quality modeling analysis and providing supplemental weight of evidence analysis for demonstrating attainment; 4) evaluating control strategies and emission reductions needed for attainment including potential feasible measures and the impact of existing and recently adopted rules and regulations by South Coast AQMD and California Air Resources Board (CARB); 5) including contingency measures; and 6) addressing other federal Clean Air Act requirements such as a Reasonable Further Progress demonstration. The Basin is expected to attain the 2006 24-hour PM2.5 standard in 2023 based on the continued implementation of existing regulations and programs by the South Coast AQMD and CARB.

Public Agency Approving Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Agency Carrying Out Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Exempt Status:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption

CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

Reasons why project is exempt: South Coast AQMD, as Lead Agency, has reviewed the proposed project pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Since the proposed project relies on the continued implementation of existing regulations and programs by the South Coast AQMD and CARB to reduce emissions without proposing new requirements that would involve physical changes, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment, because the proposed project is designed to further protect or enhance the environment by demonstrating how attainment with the 2006 24-hour PM2.5 standard in the Basin will be achieved. Further, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the proposed project.

Date of Project Approval: South Coast AQMD Governing Board Hearing: December 4, 2020

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Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature: _____



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Planning, Rule Development, and Area Sources