

# Notice of Exemption

Form D

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Energy Commission  
1516 9<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-44  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Project Title:** Next Generation Hydrogen Refueling Infrastructure Project

**Project Applicant:** North County Transit District (NCTD)

**Project Location - Specific:**

305 Via Del Norte, Oceanside, CA 92058

**Project Location - City:** Oceanside

**Project Location - County:** San Diego

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

This hydrogen refueling infrastructure will support roll out of up to fifty (50) fuel cell electric buses providing clean and reliable public transportation in California.

The nature of the project is installation of hydrogen refueling equipment at an existing compressed natural gas (CNG) station. Hydrogen refueling equipment will consist of hydrogen storage tanks, and compression and dispensing equipment. Beneficiaries will include residents in North San Diego county, and this will extend to several communities beyond the immediate project site. In addition to the location of the project site itself, NCTD's fixed-route bus service travels through several low-income communities located within the cities of Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido.

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

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** North County Transit District

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

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Cal. Code Reg.s, tit. 14, Sections 15301 ("Existing Facilities;") 15303 ("New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures;") 15304 ("Minor Alterations to Land;") 15306 (Information collection;)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The project is to develop hydrogen refueling station by adding hydrogen storage, compression, and dispensing equipment. The project will require modifications to an existing bus storage and maintenance property that currently fuels CNG buses.

Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, sect. 15301 provides that projects which consist of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, and which involve negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The proposed project adds equipment to existing CNG stations that covers an area which is approximately 7,875 square feet, with trenching of no more than 25 feet. This square footage is less than that specified in one example provided in the Regulations (i.e., 14 C.C.R. § 15301(e)(2)) of a minor addition to existing structures. Because the proposed sites are existing gas stations; the proposed addition of a hydrogen refueling facility will not significantly expand the use beyond that already existing; and the square

footage of equipment installation is small, the project falls within section 15301 and will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, sect. 15303 provides that projects which consist of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The proposed project consists of installation of small new equipment, including hydrogen storage, compression, and dispensing equipment at the site. Therefore, the proposed project falls within section 15303 and will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, sect. 15304 provides that projects which consist of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

For the installation of the equipment in this project, there will be up to 25 feet of trenching to connect storage and compression equipment to dispensers. No trees will be removed, and the surface will be restored. This reflects exactly the example given in section 15304(f). Therefore, the proposed project falls within section 15304 and will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, sect. 15306 provides that projects which consist of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

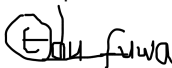
The proposed project requires collection of operational data from the deployed hydrogen refueling infrastructure for all the fuel cell buses that will fuel at the station.

**Responsible Agency**

Contact Person: Esther Odufuwa Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 916-897-3612

**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:  Date: 4/19/2021 Title: Energy Commission Specialist I

- Signed by Responsible Agency
- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_
- Signed by Applicant