



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 04/2021)**

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): District 9 395 Changeable Message Signs

DIST-CO-RTE: 09-KER/MNO-395

PM/PM: VAR

EA: 09-38230

Federal-Aid Project Number: 0919000038

Project Description

Caltrans is proposing to upgrade three existing changeable message signs on U.S. Route 395 at three locations (postmile R31.6 in Kern County; postmile 13.5 in Mono County; postmile 74.8 in Mono County). Sign upgrades may require pile driving, trenching, the construction of concrete pads or minor amounts of vegetation disturbance. In addition, utility relocation may be required. All work as anticipated to take place within existing Caltrans right-of-way at this time.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
- Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
 - Categorically Exempt. 15301 Class 1(c).** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
 - No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2).
- Covered by the Common Sense Exemption.** This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Angela Calloway

Print Name

Angie Calloway

Signature

7/30/21

Date

Project Manager

Jill Batchelder

Print Name

Jill Tognazzini

Signature

Date



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

Not Applicable

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

[] 23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2019, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- [] 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)
[] 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)
[] Activity listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

[] 23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Print Name Signature Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Jill Tognazzini 7/330/2021
Print Name Signature Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 7/30/2021

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Continuation sheet:

- The Resident Engineer will notify the project biologist thirty days prior to construction start.
- Pre-construction nesting bird surveys will be required if construction occurs between February 15 through September 30. If construction occurs in the nesting period then nesting bird surveys must be conducted within three days of construction start within two hundred and fifty feet of the project impact area for songbirds, and five hundred feet from the project impact area for nesting raptors.
- If nesting birds or raptors of the project impact area a qualified Caltrans biologist may be needed to monitor and ensure construction activities are not affecting nesting birds. An appropriate no-work buffer may be implemented as determined by the project biologist to reduce impacts caused by construction until nesting season has finished, or nesting activities have completed, and the bird nestling has fledged and left the area. If the construction activities do not appear to be disrupting nesting activities (parent birds not exhibiting stressed behavior, territorial behavior, or abandoning nest, et cetera.), then the qualified biologist may clear the area for construction to proceed.
- If a nest is found beyond 250 feet from construction, nest monitoring may be required by a qualified Biologist, especially for predatory bird species or species listed under California Endangered Species Act or Federal Endangered Species Act.
- If additional staging or contractor use areas are required or identified, they must be surveyed and approved by the project Biologist prior to their use.
- Impacts to vegetated areas must be avoided; construction and staging activities may only occur on unvegetated, compacted soil or paved areas (Kern county).
- Caltrans biologist to provide contractor training on Desert Tortoise (Kern county).
- Installation of best management practices (straw waddles) and environmentally sensitive area fencing will be implemented to protect adjacent wetland habitat on the west side the project impact area (Mono county, postmile 74.8).
- Ensure Standard Specification 14-11.15 is discussed with project engineer during the design phase so additional costs can be captured in the project cost estimates. During this phase, Caltrans will work to identify if current changeable message sign equipment contains electronic wastes considered especially hazardous.
- EPA Waste Generator ID numbers will be required for tracking and disposal of both electronic wastes and treated wood wastes. The Resident Engineer will need to contact Environmental Engineering to secure these tracking numbers when the wastes are generated during construction.
- If the disposal of treated wood waste at a facility outside of California would reduce project costs, the project engineer will need to work with Environmental Engineering to include nonstandard special provision 14-11.15 in the bid package. This would occur during the design phase.