



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Leggett Changeable Message Sign (CMS)

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-MEN-101

PM/PM: R90.0

EA: 01-0K580

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Description

A new CMS would be installed facing northbound traffic on the northbound shoulder of US Highway 101 near Leggett in Mendocino County (post mile R90.0). (See continuation sheet for project details)

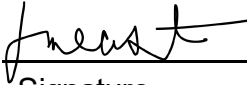
Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- 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. Class 1(f).** (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). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.
- 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

Julie East		12/10/2021
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Christopher Ghidinelli		12/10/2021
Print Name	Signature	Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

[X] 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). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. 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

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 12/10/2021

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).



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Continuation sheet:

The purpose of this project is to communicate upcoming roadway conditions to the traveling public so they can make informed driving decisions. The project is needed because this section of US 101 is remote and road conditions can change suddenly. The segment of highway between Leggett and Confusion Hill experienced 135 collisions over a 5-year period. A CMS would fulfill the project purpose by informing road users of closures or other safety concerns.

The project would install a new electrical service pedestal, 334 cabinet, 700 series CMS, 35-foot pole with a camera, and traffic census station on US Route 101 in Mendocino County at PM R90.0 near Leggett.

The CMS would be 25 feet wide by 7 feet tall. The sign would sit upon a 35-foot pole, which would be anchored by a 5-foot diameter cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) pile buried 22 feet below ground. The camera pole would also have a 2.5-foot diameter CIDH pile installed 8 feet below ground. The traffic census station would be set within the existing roadway surface.

Each electrical element would be buried in a trench 2.5 feet deep leading to the electrical service pedestal. The service pedestal would be a 5-foot by 17-foot by 4-inch concrete pad to support the 334 cabinet and pull boxes for the CMS, camera, and census station. The total length of trenching would be approximately 800 feet. Trenching would occur through a wetted area on the northbound side of the shoulder.

A large population of the locally abundant Tracy's tarplant (*Hemizonia congesta ssp. tracyi*) was documented along the ruderal, gravel shoulder within and near the environmental study limit (ESL). Permanent impacts to Tracy's tarplant would include the concrete pad and auger drillings for the message sign and camera pole installation, and temporary impacts would include disturbance from trenching. Tracy's tarplant is not considered "rare, threatened, or endangered."

Total disturbed soil area (DSA) would be approximately 16,000 square feet (0.37 acre). The project would take approximately 30 working days. No trees are proposed to be removed. No new permanent noise would result from this project and construction noise would not rise above current roadside traffic noise. No new permanent lighting fixtures would be installed for this project.

Environmental Commitments

- Best management practices (BMPs) would be used to avoid impacts to water quality (such as temporary sediment control and soil stabilization devices), prevent equipment leakage, control spills, and prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- Soil disturbing work would be limited to the dry season.
- Vegetation reestablishment or other stabilization measures would be implemented on disturbed soil areas.



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- Tracy's tarplant seeds would be collected onsite at a time deemed appropriate by Caltrans revegetation specialists prior to construction. The collected seeds would be processed and stored at a Caltrans facility and respread around the disturbed area after construction is complete. A Caltrans biologist would then monitor the site for up to 3 years after reseeding to ensure the population has recovered as expected.
- Clearing, grubbing, and excavation would be limited to specific locations delineated on the plans and existing vegetated areas would be maintained to preserve existing vegetation as much as possible.
- To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the *Corvidae* family, which include jays, crows, and ravens), no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container and disposed of at an approved garbage facility. On-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.
- Open trenches would be covered with trench plates to prevent wildlife from becoming trapped overnight.
- No construction activities would occur within a visual line-of-sight of 131 feet or less from any known active nest locations for northern spotted owl or marbled murrelet.
- Any vegetation removal would be limited to occur between September 16 and January 31 to protect migratory and nongame birds.
- If any special-status species are encountered during construction, they would be given a buffer and work would stop until the appropriate agency can be consulted.
- Prior to the start of work, Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging would be installed around sensitive natural communities, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare plant occurrences, intermittent streams, and wetlands and other waters, where appropriate. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.