NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-0344

From: California State University, Long Beach
1250 N. Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, California 90815

Project Title: North and South Campus Cellular Towers Project

Project Applicant: California State University, Long Beach

Project Location-Specific:

The project site is located on the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) campus, located at 1250 N. Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90815. The CSULB campus encompasses 322 acres and is bounded by East Atherton Street to the north, Palo Verde Avenue to the east, East 7th Street to the south, and Bellflower Boulevard to the west. The North Campus cell tower location is situated south of the campus athletic complex, with the track and field facility to the northwest, athletic fields to the north, and basketball courts and pool facilities to the northeast and east. To the southeast is the Kinesiology building and to the south is the Horn Center, including the University Art Museum. The South Campus cell tower location is situated along the campus property line with East 7th Street on the west, landscaping and campus utilities to the north, buildings used by the Liberal Arts department to the east, and a paved parking lot adjacent to the campus Telecommunications building to the south. The latitude/longitude of the project location is: 33°46'59.30" N, 118°06'50.89" W.

Project Location – City: Long Beach **Project Location – County:** Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project would install a cell tower in the North Campus as well as one in the South Campus, both on land that is vacant and limited to landscaping and hardscape. The University Police have expressed safety concerns connected to lack of cell phone coverage throughout campus, specifically in areas near parking lots and structures. In lieu of using various rooftops throughout campus to route services, the two towers proposed by the project would enable two cellular providers to offer consolidated service throughout campus.

The proposed project includes two cell towers, the North Campus cell tower and the South Campus cell tower, including fenced enclosures for each tower, concrete walkways leading to the access point of each tower, and an emergency generator at each tower site. Each tower will have the appearance of an artificial pine tree; the North Campus cell tower will have a maximum height of 80 feet, measured to the top of the steel, and the South Campus cell tower will have a maximum height of 75 feet, also measured to the top of the steel. The fenced enclosures will have either a black vinyl or black epoxy coating with black fabric and black slats.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: The Trustees of the California State University

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California State University, Long Beach

The project is exempt from CEQA under the following authority:

☒ **Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:** Section 15303 (Class 3)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed project would include two cell towers on the CSULB campus in order to increase campus safety and eliminate the need for various rooftops receptors by consolidating all cellular service within the two towers. The North Campus cell tower would reach a maximum height of 80 feet above adjacent grade with a fenced enclosure area of approximately 1,500 SF; the South Campus cell tower would reach a maximum height of 75 feet with a fenced enclosure area of approximately 1,000 SF. Both towers would be designed to resemble pine trees in order to blend in with the surrounding campus character and both would be fenced in for security purposes.

The project is categorically exempt under Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, having met the qualifying criteria provided under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303. Class 3 consists 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. Section 15303 provides some, but does not limit project scope to, examples of such structures. While cell towers are not explicitly included in this list, the proposed cell towers would be comparable in scope and function to those structures listed, which, in summary, include single family homes and duplexes, commercial developments within the range of 2,500-10,000 square feet (SF) of floor area, utility extensions and improvements, accessory structures such as garages, and sterilization units for medical waste treatment.

In addition, with adherence to existing regulations that are employed on campus, such as SCAQMD Rule 401 and the MBTA, and appropriate mitigation measures from the approved 2008 Campus Master Plan Environmental Impact Report, the construction of the project would not result in impacts to environmental resources. As such, the proposed project would be considered a New Construction of a Small Structure and would be exempt under a Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Melissa Soto **Area Code/Telephone:** (562) 985-5127

Signature: Melissa Soto **Date:** 2/3/22

Title: Program Planner, Capital Construction

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

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Notice of Exemption – Backup Documentation

Date:	January 31, 2022
Project:	CSULB North and South Campus Cellular Towers Project
To:	Anne Collins-Doehne, Office of the Chancellor Melissa Soto, CSULB
From:	Allie Beauregard, AECOM

1. Project Background

California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) proposes to implement the CSULB North and South Campus Cellular Towers Project (proposed project), which would construct two new cellular (cell) towers on campus. The proposed project would install a cell tower in the North Campus as well as one in the South Campus, both on land that is vacant except for landscaping and hardscape.

The University Police have expressed safety concerns over the lack of reliable cell phone coverage throughout campus, specifically in areas near parking lots and structures. In lieu of using various rooftops throughout campus to route services, the two towers proposed by the project would enable two cellular providers to offer consolidated service throughout campus.

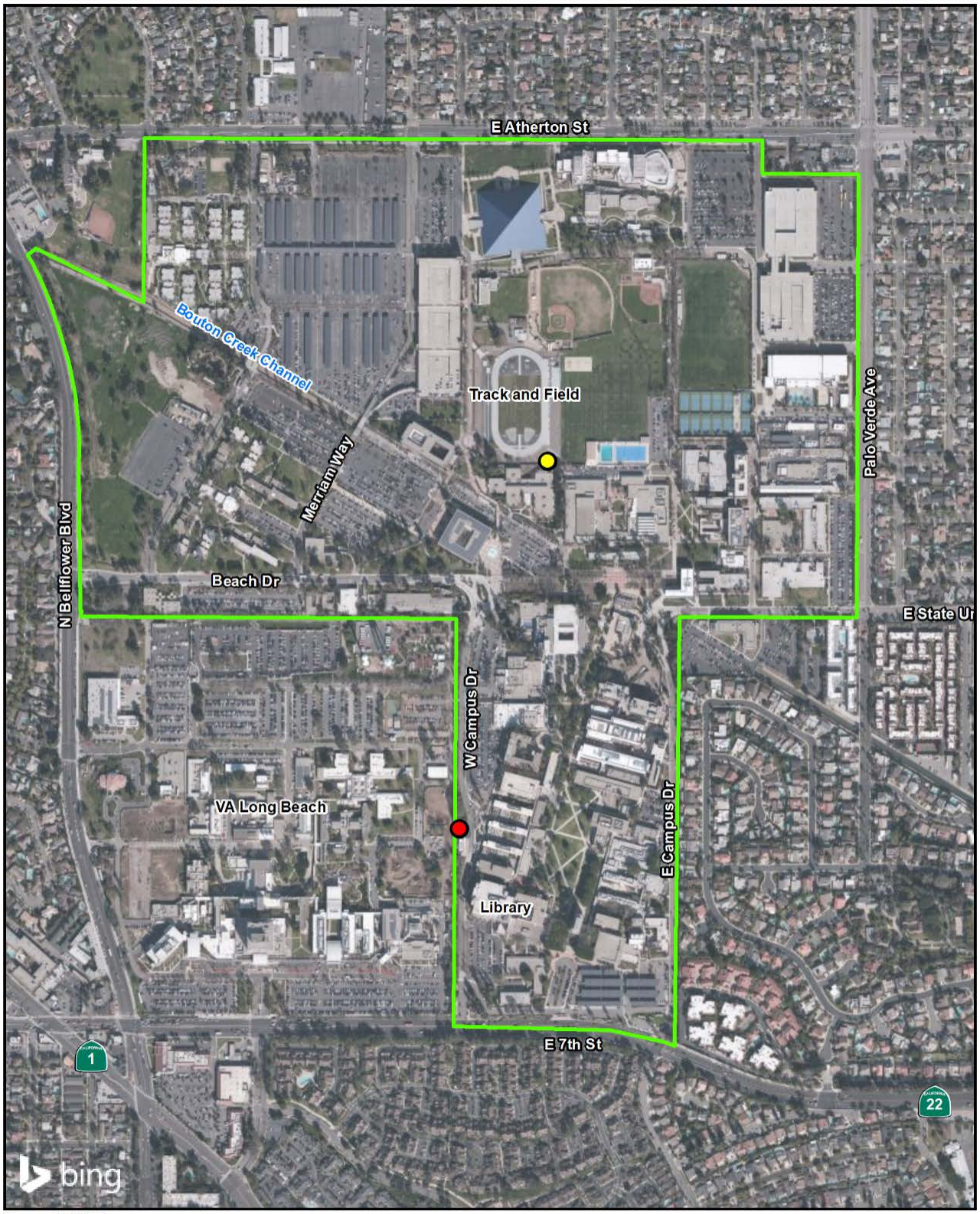
2. Project Description

2.1 Project Location and Setting

The project is located on the CSULB campus in the eastern portion of the City of Long Beach, California, and includes the North Campus cell tower location and the South Campus cell tower location. The CSULB campus encompasses 322 acres and is bounded by East Atherton Street to the north, Palo Verde Avenue to the east, East 7th Street to the south, and Bellflower Boulevard to the west. The North Campus cell tower location is situated south of the campus athletic complex, with the track and field facility to the northwest, athletic fields to the north, and basketball courts and pool facilities to the northeast and east. To the southeast is the Kinesiology building and to the south is the Horn Center, including the University Art Museum.

The South Campus cell tower location is situated along the campus property line with East 7th Street on the west, landscaping and campus utilities to the north, buildings used by the Liberal Arts department to the east, and a paved parking lot adjacent to the campus Telecommunications building to the south.

Figure 1 shows the locations of the North Campus cell tower and the South Campus cell tower within the CSULB campus.



Source: Esri, 2021

0 500 1,000 Feet

North Campus Cell Tower Location

South Campus Cell Tower Location

CSULB Campus Boundary

Figure 1

Proposed Cell Tower Locations

2.2 Project Overview

The proposed project includes two cell towers, the North Campus cell tower and the South Campus cell tower, including fenced enclosures for each tower, concrete walkways leading to the access point of each tower, and an emergency generator at each tower site. Each tower will simulate the appearance of a pine tree; the North Campus cell tower will have a maximum height of 80 feet, measured from adjacent grade to the top of the steel component of the tower structure, and the South Campus cell tower will have a maximum height of 75 feet also measured to the top of the steel component of the tower structure. The fenced enclosures will have either a black vinyl or black epoxy coating with black fabric and black slats.

Construction of the proposed project would require excavations of approximately 40 feet in depth and 7 feet, 6 inches in diameter below grade for the North Campus cell tower and 40 feet in depth and 7 feet in diameter for the South Campus cell towner. The proposed project would be constructed consistent with the recommended Best Management Practices of the geotechnical study, which includes implementation of the Tremie method. The Tremie method is a process where concrete is placed at the bottom of the excavated hole to displace the groundwater out of the hole; concrete would be placed immediately after drilling so that the hole does not remain open for more than 8 hours. Drilled pier foundations would be installed to a depth of approximately eight feet below grade. The towers will be fabricated using rebar cages at staging sites located in nearby parking lots. During the stacking of the towers, road closures at the South Campus cell tower location would be expected for up to one day; however, it is possible that this stage could occur during weekend hours to minimize the disruption to traffic. At the North Campus cell tower location, the parking lot adjacent to the Kinesiology building may require partial closure, also for up to one day and also with potential for weekend work. No tree removal would be required at the North Campus cell tower location; four trees would need to be removed at the South Campus cell tower location to accommodate the cell tower, and others may need to be trimmed. Trees to be removed at the South Campus location include the following types and dimensions:

- (1) Aleppo Pine *(Pinus halepensis)*, 25-inch diameter, 60 feet tall
- (1) Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canarienis)*, 17-inch diameter, 50 feet tall
- (1) Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canarienis)*, 18-inch diameter, 65 feet tall
- (1) Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canarienis)*, 20-inch diameter, 65 feet tall

The construction of each tower would take approximately 45 days to complete, and work would occur simultaneously at both sites, with staggered schedules to allow the sharing of a construction crew. The installation of the carrier equipment will take 30 days following construction of the cell tower; different carriers would supply each tower. Construction equipment would include pick-up trucks, a drill rig, a crane, a man lift, a small excavator, and concrete trucks. The same fleet of equipment would be used at each site. Daily construction workers on site would vary from five to 12 workers.

Typical operational maintenance of the towers would include routine metering of utility consumption provided by Campus Energy Management and routine landscaping provided by Campus Grounds. APC would perform weed abatement twice annually. Each carrier would perform maintenance checks quarterly.

2.3 Project Objectives

The objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

- To improve cell phone coverage throughout the campus and specifically to areas near parking lots and structures where the University Police expressed a need; and
- To consolidate cell phone providers to two locations on campus in lieu of using various building roof tops.

3. CEQA Regulatory Setting

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to proposed projects initiated by, funded by, or requiring discretionary approvals from state or local government agencies. CEQA Guidelines apply generally to discretionary actions by agencies which may have a significant effect on the environment. However, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that an activity may have a significant effect on the environment, and if the activity meets the conditions for a Categorical Exemption, it is considered exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 through 15333 describes the 33 classes of projects that are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA, also known as Categorical Exemptions. It has been determined that the proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. This memorandum has been prepared to review the proposed project and assess the potential for the proposed project to have an impact on the environment. To fulfill the purposes of CEQA, this memorandum provides documentation to support the determination that the proposed project qualifies for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

Class 3 consists 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. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

a) *One single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption;*

b) *A duplex or similar multi-family residential structure, totaling no more than four dwelling units. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to apartments, duplexes and similar structures designed for not more than six dwelling units;*

c) *A store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2,500 square feet in floor area. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to up to four such commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive;*

d) *Water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction;*

e) *Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences; or*

f) An accessory steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical waste at a facility occupied by a medical waste generator, provided that the unit is installed and operated in accordance with the Medical Waste Management Act (Section 117600, et seq., of the Health and Safety Code) and accepts no offsite waste.

4. Environmental Review

The project site is located on the CSULB Campus. CSULB is a large 322-acre university campus, accommodating 80 buildings, offering sports, recreation and educational facilities. Since the campus' inception in 1949, the site has undergone numerous upgrades over the years to bring it to its current configuration and capacity. With a student population of approximately 38,000, the campus is considered to be a highly developed landscape, characterized by built features such as parking lots, access roads, large buildings, walkways, sporting facilities, paved courtyards, landscaped gardens, and maintained fields and lawns.

The North Campus cell tower location is developed with walkways, hardscaping and landscaping, and the South Campus cell tower location is developed with landscaping. No native vegetation, riparian habitat, or other sensitive natural community or habitat that could support endangered, rare, or threatened species are present at either cell tower location. Additionally, the project site does not contain any watercourse, greenbelt, or open space for wildlife movement. As such, the project site is not considered to be an area of biological sensitivity. As the proposed project includes the removal of two ornamental trees at the South Campus cell tower location, the trees may provide suitable nesting habitat for non-special status birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (CFGC). If tree removal occurs during the nesting season (February 15 through September 15), CSULB would be required to conduct nesting bird surveys for the trees proposed for removal pursuant to the MBTA and CFGC in order to avoid impacts to nesting birds.

The project site is located in a seismically active area, as is most of southern California. The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local codes relative to seismic criteria. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure a less than significant impact related to fault rupture. Additionally, the proposed project is consistent with current land uses in a university environment and are not expected to result in any impacts to aesthetics or land use and planning.

The proposed project would generate air pollutants as a result of construction emissions, specifically short-term construction equipment emissions and fugitive dust emissions during ground disturbing and demolition activities. It is mandatory for all construction projects in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) to comply with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403 for Fugitive Dust, which includes measures to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes. Measures include, but are not limited to, applying soil binders to uncovered areas, reestablishing ground cover as quickly as possible, utilizing a wheel washing system or other control measures to remove bulk material from tires and vehicle undercarriages before vehicles exit the project site, and maintaining effective cover over exposed areas. Due to the limited size of the project, compliance with the provisions and best management practices propagated by Rule 403, would minimize impacts associated with air pollutant emissions during construction. The construction contractor would also be required to ensure that activities comply with SCAQMD Rules 401 (Visible Emissions) and 402 (Nuisance) to prevent the occurrence of public nuisances and visible dust plumes traveling off-site. The proposed project would not result in long-term air quality impacts during operations as the proposed project is intended for passive uses and would serve the existing users of the campus and site.

The proposed project would include ground-disturbing activities, such as excavating, grading, and compaction of soil. These activities could result in the potential for erosion, though soil exposure would be temporary and short-term in nature. Storm events occurring during the construction phase would

have the potential to carry disturbed sediments and spilled substances from construction activities off-site to nearby receiving waters; however, no sensitive waterways are located within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site.

The proposed project may generate increased noise levels during demolition, grading and excavation activities. Construction activities are anticipated to occur during standard construction hours (Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) and no residential uses are located within the immediate vicinity of the project site. Additionally, excavation and grading activities would be short term and temporary. Having complete control of the proposed project, CSULB has the ability to adjust construction activities to avoid disrupting academic activities on-campus. If construction noise were to disrupt activities at nearby instructional buildings, CSULB would work with the construction contractor to reduce noise levels. The actions may include avoiding heavy-duty equipment use during academic activities and temporarily relocating affected uses.

A total of 27 previously recorded cultural resources have been documented within 0.5-mile of the project sites. The proposed locations of the North Campus cell tower may partially overlap one resource, site CA-LAN-1005; however, previous archeological testing and monitoring of CA-LAN-1005 resulted in negative results and no midden soils or artifacts were observed (AECOM, 2020). The site showed evidence of a utility trench dug prior to soil redeposition; as such CA-LAN-1005 was determined to not be an archaeological site and to have very low sensitivity for archaeological material. No known archaeological resources or burial sites are located within the project locations of the proposed cellular towers, and the area has been previously disturbed with development.

Given this, as well as the high level of past ground disturbance and development in the area, it is unlikely that the construction of the proposed project would encounter any known or as yet unknown cultural resources. Consistent with the 2008 Campus Master Plan EIR and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), CR-1 through CR-4, construction activities on campus require the use of an archaeological and Native American monitor during ground-disturbing activities (CSULB, 2008). Given the low likelihood of cultural resources and the implementation of appropriate Master Plan mitigation measures, the proposed project is not expected to result in any impact to cultural resources.

If human remains are discovered, work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be suspended and the Los Angeles County Coroner contacted per existing regulations. If the remains are deemed Native American in origin, the Coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission and identify a Most Likely Descendant pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5. Work may be resumed at the university's discretion but will only commence after consultation and treatment have been concluded. Work may continue on other parts of the proposed project site while consultation and treatment are conducted. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure no impact to human remains would occur.

5. Findings

As discussed in Section 3, CSULB intends to pursue a Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures Categorical Exemption for the proposed project. Class 3 consists 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. Section 15303 provides some, but does not limit project scope to, examples of such structures. While cell towers are not explicitly included in this list, the proposed cell towers would be comparable in scope and function to those structures listed, which, in summary, include single family homes and duplexes, commercial developments within the range of 2,500-10,000 square feet (SF) of floor area, utility extensions and improvements, accessory structures such as garages, and sterilization units for medical waste treatment.

The proposed project would include two cell towers on the CSULB campus in order to increase campus safety and eliminate the need for various rooftops receptors by consolidating all cellular service within the two towers. The North Campus cell tower would reach a maximum height of 80 feet with a fenced enclosure area of approximately 1,500 SF; the South Campus cell tower would reach a maximum height of 75 feet with a fenced enclosure area of approximately 1,000 SF. Both locations are minimally developed with hardscaping and landscaping under existing conditions. Both towers would be designed to resemble pine trees in order to blend in with the surrounding campus character and both would be fenced in for security purposes. As such, the proposed project would be considered a New Construction of a Small Structure and would be exempt under a Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

Additionally, in order to pursue a Class 3 Exemption, the project cannot be found to meet any of the following conditions for Exceptions listed within Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines.

a) *Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*

   The proposed project site is located within a fully developed and previously disturbed site within the existing CSULB campus and is not located in an area that would be considered environmentally sensitive according to officially adopted designations and maps.

   There are no designated scenic highways adjacent to or near the project site. The project site is not identified as farmland by the California Resources Agency as part of the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Thus, no part of the proposed project would be located on or near Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Additionally, the project site is not developed for farming or agricultural use, and no Williamson Act Contract is applicable to the project site. Furthermore, no portion of the project site is zoned for or developed as forest land or timberland as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) and Government Code Section 4526, respectively. There are no known sensitive biological resources in the project vicinity, and the project site is not located within the boundaries of a Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan. The project site is currently zoned for and developed with institutional uses associated with the CSULB campus. No classified or designated mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance are known to occur on the project site. No portion of the City of Long Beach, including the project site, is located within or near a state responsibility area, nor is it classified as a very high fire hazard severity zone.

   The project site is located in a seismically active area, as is most of Southern California. However, the project site is not located within a state-designated Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zone. The nearest faults to the project site include the Newport-Inglewood fault, located approximately 1.4 miles west of campus, and the Los Alamitos fault, located approximately 1.9 miles northeast of the campus. No active faults are known to cross the project site. The project site is not located in an area identified as a potential landslide hazard area. However, the North Campus Tower location is located in an area designated as a liquefaction zone. The maximum excavation would be limited to approximately 40 feet. As such, the proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable codes relative to seismic criteria, specifically liquefaction.

   There are no hazardous materials sites listed within or near the project site. The project site is not listed in the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker system which includes leaking underground fuel tank sites and spills, leaks, investigations, and cleanups sites; or the

Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Data Management System which includes CORTESE sites, or the Environmental Protection Agency's database of regulated facilities. As such, the proposed project would not be located in an officially adopted area of hazardous or critical concern.

b) *Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*

The purpose of the proposed project is to consolidate cellular services on campus to two towers, one each located in the North Campus and South Campus. Operation and maintenance of the proposed project would ensure that additional projects of the same type would not be necessary. As such, the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative impacts that would qualify as an exception to make the exemption inapplicable.

c) *Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

As detailed in Section 4.1, given the location, scope, and purpose of the proposed project, there would be no significant impacts or effects on environmental resources during construction or operation. It is not anticipated that any unusual circumstances exist on the two project sites that would result in significant impacts or increase the severity of any less than significant impacts.

d) *Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*

As stated above in response (a), there are no designated scenic highways adjacent to or near the project site. The project site does not offer views of any scenic resources and views of the project site would not be considered scenic. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or damage scenic resources within a scenic highway.

e) *Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*

As stated above in response (a), there are no hazardous materials sites listed within or near the project site. The project site is not listed in the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker system which includes leaking underground fuel tank sites and spills, leaks, investigations, and cleanups sites; or the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Data Management System which includes CORTESE sites, or the Environmental Protection Agency's database of regulated facilities.

f) *Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource*.

As stated above in Section 4 above, one site of cultural significance was previously recorded near the vicinity of the North Campus cell tower location. Following a detailed review of existing documents and research, it was determined that this site likely consists of redeposited archaeological material and no prehistoric artifacts, midden soils, or evidence of an intact archaeological site were observed during previous investigations. In addition, the most recent site form update for the site states that it is not an archaeological site (AECOM, 2020). As such

it has been determined that no impacts to historical or cultural resources are likely to occur during implementation of the proposed project.

As such, the list of Exceptions does not apply to the proposed project and the proposed project qualifies for a Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

6. References

AECOM, Extended Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment Housing Expansion Phase 1 Housing Administration and Commons Building Project, California State University, Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California, 2020, available at: https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/groups/physical-planning-and-facilities-management/DCS/SEIR-2020/appendix_b_extended_phase_i_cultural_resources_assessment_final.pdf

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City of Long Beach Development Services Department, Zoning and Land Use GIS Map, available at: https://longbeachca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17b68e7082ef4a4ea8ba6b0d04729758

CSULB, Campus Master Plan Environmental Impact Report, 2008, available at https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/groups/physical-planning-and-facilities-management/PP/csulb_feir_final_pdf.pdf

U.S. Environmental Protect Agency. Envirofacts Database. Available at: https://enviro.epa.gov/