



May 30, 2023

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION Wolf-Livestock Compensation Pilot Program

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), by and through its Wildlife Branch, has taken final action to approve the Wolf-Livestock Compensation Pilot Program. In taking its final agency action for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved this project relying on the categorical exemption for “Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources” contained in CEQA Guidelines section 15307.

In 2021, the California state legislature appropriated funding through Senate Bill 170, Ch. 204, Statutes of 2021 (Section 52) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife to “develop a grant process to allocate funds to pay for the deterrence of wolf presence near livestock, the impacts of wolf presence on livestock, and for verified loss of livestock for participating ranchers.” To address the ongoing economic impacts associated with depredation, other impacts associated with wolf presence and the costs of employing deterrence tools, CDFW has developed the Wolf-Livestock Compensation Pilot Program to award grants consistent with these legislative directives. The review effort pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061 lead staff to conclude the proposed project is an activity that falls within the Class 7 categorical exemption discussed below.

Class 7 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds approval of the Wolf-Livestock Compensation Pilot Program to be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15307, the exemption for “Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources”. A livestock depredation compensation program was identified as a priority in the 2016 Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California. The project complements and supports the Conservation Plan by developing and maintaining a cooperative livestock producer assistance program that assists livestock producers experiencing wolf-related livestock impacts and losses. Compensation programs support the ability of livestock producers to weather the economic impacts associated with wolf depredation events, with other impacts associated with wolf presence and with employing deterrence measures while still allowing producers to maintain the resources and habitat necessary for coexistence of predators and livestock.