

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
 PO Box 3044  
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113  
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Energy Commission  
 715 P Street  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Project Applicant:** Charge Bliss, Inc.

**Project Title:** Paskenta Microgrid-Long Duration Energy Storage

**Project Location – Specific:** 2655 Everett Freeman Way

**Project Location – City:** Corning 96021      **Project Location – County:** Tehama

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

This project will deploy a 20 MWh non-lithium-ion Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) system. The LDES system will be operated as part of a microgrid that includes 5 MW of solar photovoltaic and serves the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians. The project will demonstrate the microgrid's ability to power critical Tribal operations during outage events, such as Public Safety Power Shut Off (PSPS) events, and peak grid demand. The beneficiaries of this project will be the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians.

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

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Charge Bliss, Inc.

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

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number

Statutory Exemptions. State code number.

Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15061(b)(3))

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

This project is covered by the Common Sense Exemption under 14 CCR 15061 (b) (3) that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians entered into a 2020 Gaming Compact with the State of California. The Legislature ratified the compact in California Government Code, section 12012.101. Under the Gaming Compact, the State has agreed to NOT follow the typical CEQA process in circumstances like this grant. Government Code section 12012.101(b) indicates:

In deference to tribal sovereignty, none of the following shall be deemed a project for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act . . .

(D) The execution of an intergovernmental agreement between a tribe and the Department of Transportation, or other state agency, negotiated pursuant to the express authority of, or as expressly referenced in, a tribal-state gaming compact or an amended tribal-state gaming compact ratified by this section

(E) The on-reservation impacts of compliance with the terms of a tribal-state gaming compact or an amended tribal-state gaming compact ratified by this section

The grant activities fall under the Gaming Compact. The proposed Project consists of a single phase of development that will serve the entire gaming facility and accessory facilities amounting to an average peak load of approximately 1 MW. The Tribe has explained its environmental compliance under the Gaming Compact for this project in the Tribal Environmental Evaluation (TEE. The TEE shows that environmental factors have been evaluated and avoided or mitigated. On May 18, 2023, the Tribal Council of the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians approved the issuance of a Finding of No Significant impact for the project through Resolution Number TC2023-46.

Off-reservation impacts must still be evaluated under Government Code section 12012.101(b)(2), but this project is exempt under the “common sense” CEQA exemption because the proposed project will not:

- construct on or alter any off-reservation land;
- impact local air quality;
- use groundwater resources or otherwise impact any off-reservation water resources;
- build additional transportation infrastructure;
- generate additional traffic volumes from commercial activities of the Casino;
- increase, once the project is complete, ambient noise beyond the existing commercial activities; or
- degrade the visual character or quality of off-reservation views, including those of scenic resources or objects of aesthetic significance.

Compared with the current supply of energy, the proposed project will improve energy resiliency for Tribal facilities and the local electric grid, as well as reduce overall energy demand on the local energy provider and lower fossil fuel usage and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Because the proposed project will improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions, and does not provide for any physical changes outside of the Indian reservation, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the off-reservation environment. Based on all these factors, the proposed project meets the CEQA “common sense” exemption


This project does not involve impacts on any particularly sensitive environment; does not involve any cumulative impacts of successive projects of the same type in the same place that might be considered significant; does not involve unusual circumstances that might have a significant effect on the environment; will not result in damage to scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway; the project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5; and the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Therefore, none of the exceptions to categorical exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 apply to this project and this project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

**Lead Agency**

**Contact Person:**     Javier Flores     **Area code/Telephone/Ext:**     916-931-9604    

**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:**   6/7/23   **Title:**   Associate Electrical Engineer  

Authority cited: Sections 21088 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Charge Bliss, Inc.  
LDS-22-003

Signed by Responsible Agency

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_