

State of California
 Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
 GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

**California Environmental Quality Act
 Notice of Exemption**

To: Office of Planning & Research
 State Clearinghouse
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
 Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
 715 P Street, MS 1803
 Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: UIC Chevron 022024-001

Project Applicant: Chevron U.S.A. Inc.

Project Location: Kern County, Lost Hills Oil Field; 32/26S/21E/MD; 35.63003922, -
 119.73603058; 35.62499237, -119.73071289

Project Description: The originally approved project consists of maintenance on an existing observation well and conversion of an existing well from production to observation. This includes cleanout of the wells to effective depth, laying cement, conducting a casing integrity test, and perforating within the same formation and within the existing completion interval. Temporary equipment for the project includes a workover rig, crew room, generator, blowout preventer, workstring trailer, portable water tank, vacuum truck, returns tank, wireline truck, foam unit, open top tank and/or power swivel, cement truck/pump, and bulk truck. No new ground disturbance will occur, and no new facilities will be constructed.

CalGEM has approved permits for Chevron U.S.A. Inc. to rework the oil and gas wells listed below, in the Lost Hills oil field.

API #	Well Name
0403008166	5-1C
0403023946	14-13UW

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Exemption:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing Project (<i>pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973</i>)	21169	15261 (b)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Categorical Exemption:	21084		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 1: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 3: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 6: Information Collection		15306	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 7: Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 8: Protection of the Environment		15308	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 11: Accessory Structures		15311	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 21: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 30: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 33: Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333	
<input type="checkbox"/>	General Exemption (“common sense”)		15061 (b)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not a “Project” subject to CEQA		15378 (b)(2)	

CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR 15300.2): where project is located (e.g. sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM’s determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR § 15301, 1684.1): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 1” exemption per the CEQA Guidelines because the project involves the maintenance of existing structures with negligible expansion of use. The operator proposes to conduct maintenance on an existing observation well and convert an existing oil production well to an observation well for data collection purposes. The project would take place in a well-developed oil field that already includes observation wells. The project does not involve the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities and will utilize existing facilities including roads. The observation wells would be used to monitor a potential upward fluid migration within a portion of UIC project 43200024 and would not expand production capacity. A CalGEM engineer has confirmed that the proposed work is within the scope of the UIC project 43200024 and is a continuation of operations within the confines of the project. For these reasons and as the project file supports, any change in use or the wells is negligible and qualifies for the Class 1 exemption.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 2” exemption per the CEQA Guidelines because the project involves reconstructing an existing structure that will be located on the same site and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity. The project involves the conversion of an existing

oil production well to an observation well, which will take place on an existing wellpad in a well-developed oil field. The structure would have substantially the same purpose, which is to maintain the level of service of the well in the field while ensuring the safety of oil field operations. The capacity of the well structures being replaced or reconstructed are substantially the same because the work will convert the well for data collection purposes and would not expand the former or existing production capacity or well bore.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR § 15304, 1684.2): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 4” exemption per the CEQA Guidelines because the project will result in only minor alterations with negligible effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation. The project involves the maintenance of an existing observation well and conversion of an existing oil production well to an observation well. The operator indicates that no new ground disturbance would occur, and no new facilities would be constructed. Access to the project would be from existing infield roads, and the existing well pad would be used to stage the maintenance equipment. Therefore, there would be negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the environmental conditions.

Class 6, Information Collection (14 CCR § 15306): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 6” exemption per the CEQA Guidelines because the project will maintain an observation well and convert a production well to an observation well for data collection purposes. The purpose of the wells is not to produce oil or gas. Rather, the wells will be used to monitor and collect data regarding potential upward fluid migration within a portion of UIC project 43200024. The data collection will inform the operator and CalGEM in managing and regulating, respectively, existing UIC operations. Therefore, the proposed will not result in any serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource such as species and the Class 6 exemption applies.

Classes 7 and 8, Protection of Natural Resources and the Environment (14 CCR §§ 15307, 15308): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 7” and “Class 8” exemptions per the CEQA Guidelines because CalGEM would approve the NOIs for maintaining an observation well and converting a production well into an observation well so that data can be collected regarding potential upward fluid migration and then used to make operational and regulatory decisions to maintain or protect natural resources and the environment, including public health and safety from environmental conditions. In addition, to the extent any casing pressure testing demonstrates the presence of a leak, Classes 7 and 8 cover the immediate work to stop the leak so as to protect natural resources and the environment, including public health and safety from environmental conditions.

Exceptions to Exemptions:

The Division further finds that there are no exceptions to the otherwise-applicable categorical exemptions (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300.2 (c)). There is no substantial evidence that there are any “unusual circumstances” associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there is no significant “cumulative impacts” resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on these exemptions is appropriate.

Consistent with the purposes of Public Resources Code § 3250 et seq and the documentation available for the preliminary review, the proposed project will benefit the environment. In addition, the work under the contracts and any resulting impacts will be temporary in duration. Therefore, the project can be considered exempt from the need for full CEQA review.

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials are available for public inspection at CalGEM's CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, 18th floor, Sacramento, CA 95814; or an electronic copy of these documents may also be accessed online at the State Clearinghouse: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov>.

Certified: Mikayla Vaba **Date:** _____
California Geologic Energy Management Division
CEQA Program