

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E****To:** Office of Planning and ResearchP.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044County Clerk
County of: Ventura
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009**From: (Public Agency):** Ventura County Transportation Commission751 E. Daily Dr., Ste 420
Camarillo, CA 93010Project Title: Sespe Creek Bridge Emergency RepairProject Applicant: Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)

Project Location - Specific:

Santa Paula Branch Line Rail bridge northeast of Old Telegraph Road: Lat/Lon: 34.406052 / -118.931301

Project Location - City: FillmoreProject Location - County: Ventura**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) Rail Bridge (Mile Post 423.44) over Sespe Creek Overflow was damaged by catastrophic storms during the winter of 2022-2023. The bridge is located in unincorporated Ventura County west of the City of Fillmore, Ventura County. The bridge was constructed in 1969 with 15 spans spaced 29.83-feet apart for a total bridge length of 450-feet. On January 10, 2023, following a series of large storms that produced extreme sediment and debris laden flows, three span bents were washed out on the western end of the bridge. The rail and attached rail ties were left suspended between the abutment and the fourth bent, leaving this line out of service. The railroad track structure and bridge abutment sustained additional damage and erosion during severe atmospheric river storms in early February 2024. The Governor of the State of California declared a State of Emergency on January 4, 2023 related to the severe winter storms and subsequent flooding and damage (CDAA 23-001). On January 14, 2023, the President of the United States issued a disaster declaration for the California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides (DR-4683-CA). The Governor of the State of California also declared a State of Emergency on February 4, 2024 related to severe winter storms, flooding and damage (CDAA 24-001). On April 13, 2024, the President of the United States issued a disaster declaration the California Severe Winter Storms, Tornadoes, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides from January 31 – February 9, 2024 (DR-4769-CA). VCTC has requested Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding to compensate for the structure repair. All work to be performed in compliance with Metrolink engineering standards, as applicable.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 15269 (a). Authority Cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Reasons why project is exempt:

The State identified a list of projects that are exempt from CEQA by law (Article 18 of the State CEQA Guidelines). Statutory Exemption 15269 (a) states: CEQA does not apply to the following emergency projects: (a) Projects to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, commencing with Section 8550 of the Government Code. This includes projects that will remove, destroy, or significantly alter an historical resource when that resource represents an imminent threat. The Governor of the State of California declared States of Emergency on January 4, 2023 related to the severe winter storms and subsequent flooding and damage (CDAA 23-001) and on February 4, 2024 related to severe winter storms, flooding and damage (CDAA 24-001). The President of the United States issued disaster declarations for the California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides (DR-4683-CA) on January 14, 2023, and for the California Severe Winter Storms, Tornadoes, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides from January 31 – February 9, 2024 (DR-4769-CA) on April 13, 2024. The bridge and railroad track repairs described herein are statutorily exempt from CEQA under 15269(a) and are statutorily excluded (STATEX) from NEPA and the preparation of environmental impact statements and environmental assessments by section 316 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5159. Actions falling within the bounds of these statutory exclusions are exempt from NEPA, including all NEPA review and documentation. These actions must, however, still comply with all applicable environmental laws and Executive Orders.

Lead AgencyContact Person: Amanda FaganArea Code/Telephone/Extension: 805-642-1591 x.103**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. No
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes

Signature: Amanda L. Fagan Date: 5/3/2024 Title: Director of Planning & Sustainability

■ Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____