



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)**

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Stone Lagoon Elk EDS

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-HUM-101

PM/PM: 114.0/115.5

EA: 01-0M870

Federal-Aid Project Number: 0123000080

Project Description

Installation of a temporary Elk Detection System along approximately one mile of SR 101 near Stone Lagoon. The system consists of approximately 20 wooden posts, two CMS systems, two flashing beacons and two static elk warning signs. This project is part of a collaborative study with Cal Poly Humboldt and CDFW.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
- Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
- Categorically Exempt. Class 15301.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
 - No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.
- Covered by the Common Sense Exemption.** This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Stephanie Frederickson		06/12/2024
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Caren Coonrod		06/13/2024
Print Name	Signature	Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

Not Applicable

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(8)

23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Stephanie Frederickson Signature 06/12/2024
Print Name Signature Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Caren Coonrod Signature 06/13/2024
Print Name Signature Date

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 6/12/2024

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).



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Continuation sheet:

The purpose of this project is to install an electronic detection system (EDS) along an approximately one-mile-long segment of U.S. 101 in Humboldt County near Stone Lagoon to reduce Roosevelt Elk and vehicle collisions. Additionally, the project will collect data that will be analyzed by a graduate student at Cal Poly Humboldt to determine the efficacy, reliability and reproducibility in decreasing elk/vehicle collisions and habitat fragmentation.

This project is needed because the state highway system is an impediment to big game migratory, season, and daily movement patterns. This area of the highway has the highest concentrations of elk crossings in coastal Humboldt and Del Norte counties. It is ranked as the highest priority in the Caltrans District 1 area for addressing roadkill of large mammals. The area has a high volume of traffic and seasonal tourism, with visitors frequently stopping along the narrow roadway and shoulders to view elk. This causes congestion and unsafe conditions for wildlife, drivers, and pedestrians.

Water Quality, Hazardous Materials, Visual reviews, Cultural and Biological reviews have been completed.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to avoid impacts to water quality. No permanent water quality impacts are anticipated.

A Lead Compliance plan would be required as a contract item for soil disturbance/removal. Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) present at the site is not at a high enough concentration that it would be subject to further requirements of the Caltrans/DTSC ADL agreement for handling ADL contaminated soils.

The project would not result in substantial impacts to visual quality and visual character for highway travelers or neighbors and would not adversely affect any "Designated Scenic Resource" as defined by CEQA statutes or guidelines, or Caltrans policy.

A field visit and visual assessment confirmed that this project has no potential to impact cultural resources, according to the existing provided plans, location map, project description, and informed through conversation with Native American community members. Based on a literature review, research review, field inspection and no concerns from the Native American community, it has been determined that this project has no potential to affect historic resources.

Caltrans has determined that there will be no take of sensitive species or habitats, no biological permits or consultations from regulatory agencies are required. A CDP waiver would be required by the California Coastal Commission.

The following measures have been included as part of this project to prevent biological impacts:

- To protect migratory and nongame birds (occupied nests and eggs), if possible vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur within September 16 and January 31). If



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vegetation removal is required during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. The buffer would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.

- To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the *Corvidae* family which includes jays, crows, and ravens), no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container daily and disposed of at an approved waste facility at least once a week. Also, on-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.
- Straw, straw bales, seed, mulch, or other material used for erosion control or landscaping would be free of noxious weed seed and propagules\
- All equipment would be thoroughly cleaned of all dirt and vegetation prior to entering the job site to prevent importing invasive non-native species. Project personnel would adhere to the latest version of the *California Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Cleaning/Decontamination Protocol (Northern Region)* for all field gear and equipment in contact with water.









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Final Audit Report

2024-06-13

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