

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:** CC Calgren 042024-0001

**Project Applicant:** Calgren Renewable Fuels

**Project Location:** Tulare County, Section 25, Township 22S, Range 23E  
Latitude 35.98500000, Longitude -119.42972222

**Project Description:** GFP Ethanol, LLC, doing business as Calgren Renewable Fuels (Calgren) proposes to drill one new stratigraphic test well (the proposed Project) in the unincorporated area of Tulare County. The Tulare County Carbon Storage Project (TCCSP) is partially funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), under the Carbon Storage Assurance Facility Enterprise (Carbon SAFE) program. The federal grant with agreement number for the proposed Project is DE-FE0032264.

The new well will gather geologic data that will be used to support the development of a geologic carbon capture and storage project known as the TCCSP. The proposed three-acre Project site is located in western Tulare County, at the southwest corner of Avenue 108 and Road 64, and approximately 7.6 miles west of the City of Pixley. The Project site is generally flat sloping slightly from east to west. Elevation across the Project site ranges from approximately 197–198 feet above mean sea level. The Project site is disked annually for agriculture. West and south of the Project is in like kind and used for dry farming. No irrigation is present on the Project site. The east edge is bordered by a dirt farm road and agricultural canal. Further east is used for agriculture. North of the site is non-native grassland, alkali sink.

The proposed new drill will require (1) clearing of vegetation land cover and leveling soil within the impacted area, and (2) construction of one temporary well pad. The total expected footprint of the impacted area is 3 acres. After the well is completed, the impacted area will undergo restoration to its previous state, apart from a 209 by 209 feet sized parcel, where the wellhead and cellar will be housed and fenced off.

Well drilling and completion is expected to take approximately 60 days to complete. A work-over rig will be used to complete the well. Other temporary equipment such as pumps, flat tanks, hoses, forklifts, cranes, lights, and generators will be used, as necessary. Vehicles will be used to transport equipment, materials, and personnel on-site. Waste materials (solid and liquid) will be properly stored and disposed of as non-hazardous or hazardous waste, as appropriate, at a facility licensed to accept the waste.

Drilling may require up to a maximum of 750 barrels (31,500 gallons) of water per day. Water will either be purchased from a local source and trucked to the site, or if possible, a direct connection with a nearby municipal water line will be set up with the appropriate utility company.

As the TCCSP proceeds Calgren’s plan for the well is to convert into an observation well for the Class VI project.

The proposed Project consists of CalGEM approving one permit for Calgren to drill one stratigraphic well at Latitude 35.98500000, Longitude -119.42972222, in Tulare County.

**Exempt Status:** As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed Project is exempt from full 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 and that none of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Statutory Exemption:</b>			
<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"/>	<b>Categorical Exemption:</b>	21084		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 1:</b> Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 2:</b> Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 3:</b> New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 4:</b> Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 6:</b> Information Collection		15306	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 7:</b> Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 8:</b> Protection of the Environment		15308	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 11:</b> Accessory Structures		15311	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 21:</b> Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 30:</b> Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Class 33:</b> Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Exemption</b> (“common sense”)		15061 (b)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not a “Project” subject to CEQA</b>		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 6, Information Collection (14 CCR § 15306):** Class 6 applies because it consists of “[B]asic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may

be strictly for information gathering purposes only, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15306.) The proposed Project would construct a stratigraphic research well on previously disturbed ground. The proposed Project will not result in serious or major disturbance to listed species. The purpose of the well is to gather geologic data that will be used to support the development of a geologic carbon capture and storage project. The Class 6 exemption therefore applies, as it involves basic data collection that will inform the potential for geologic carbon capture and storage.

**Exceptions to Exemptions:** CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, 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 there are no significant “cumulative impacts” resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

Consistent with the purposes of PRC § 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 can be made available to the public by contacting the CalGEM CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, MS 1803, Sacramento, CA 95814-3530; by calling (916) 445-9686; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting [CEQA@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:CEQA@conservation.ca.gov). A copy of this NOE may also be accessed online at the State Clearinghouse: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov>.

**Certified:** *Jan Perez*

**Date:** 8/2/2024

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Department of Conservation,  
Geologic Energy Management Division  
CEQA Program