

County of Riverside
Facilities Management
3450 14th Street, Suite 200, Riverside, CA 92501

FOR COUNTY CLERK USE ONLY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

June 22, 2023

Project Name: California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Public Safety Communications (PSC) License Agreement with Department of General Services (DGS) at Black Rock Communication Site, Blythe

Project Number: FM047134001800

Project Location: North of Black Rock Road and Interstate 10, one mile west of Blyth Airport; Blythe, California; Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 818-231-027

Description of Project: The County of Riverside owns certain real property located in the County of Riverside, State of California, situated at latitude 33 36 49.5, longitude 114 46 7.0 and identified with Assessor's Parcel Number 818-231-027. The site, known as Black Rock Communications Ste, contains existing electronic communications facilities, including a tower and antenna. Cal OES, acting through DGS, has been operating continuously since April 1, 2006. DGS is seeking a new License Agreement that will be for a five-year period, commencing July 1, 2023 and terminating June 30, 2028.

The License Agreement with CGS is defined as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is the letting of property involving existing facilities; no substantial expansion of the existing facility will occur. The operation of the facility will continue to provide communication services. No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Riverside County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Facilities Management

Exempt Status: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities Exemption; Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption. Codified under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Article 5, Section 15061.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of the categorical exemption as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The project will not cause an impact to an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern nor would the project involve unusual circumstances that could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. The project would not result in impacts to scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, historic resources, or other sensitive natural environments, or have a cumulative effect to the environment. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to occur with the License Agreement.

- Section 15301 – Class 1 Existing Facilities Exemption:** This categorical exemption includes the operation, repair, maintenance, leasing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities, provided the exemption only involves negligible or no expansion of the previous site’s use. The project, as proposed, is limited to the continued use of an existing communication site with the same tenant. The project will not substantially increase or expand the use of the site and is limited to the continued use of the site in a similar capacity; therefore, the project is exempt as the project meets the scope and intent of the Class 1 Exemption identified in Section 15301, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions of the CEQA Guidelines.
- Section 15061 (b) (3) – “Common Sense” Exemption:** In accordance with CEQA, the use of the Common Sense Exemption is based on the “general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) (3). The use of this exemption is appropriate if “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.” *Ibid*. This determination is an issue of fact and if sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity cannot have a significant effect on the environment, then the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68. The ruling in this case stated that if a project falls within a category exempt by administrative regulation or 'it can be seen with certainty that the activity in question will not have a significant effect on the environment', no further agency evaluation is required. With certainty, there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The proposed License Agreement will not result in any direct or indirect physical environmental impacts. The use and operation of the facility will be substantially similar to the existing use and will not create any new environmental impacts to the surrounding area. No impacts beyond the ongoing, existing use of the site would occur. Therefore, in no way, would the project as proposed have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact and the project is exempt from further CEQA analysis.

Therefore, the County of Riverside Facilities Management hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the project as proposed is exempt under CEQA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.

Signed:  **Date:** 6-22-2023
 Mike Sullivan, Senior Environmental Planner
 County of Riverside, Facilities Management