



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

**Project Information**

**Project Name (if applicable):** Culvert Replacement

**DIST-CO-RTE:** 10-MER-152, 5                      **PM/PM:** Various

**EA:** 10-1S580                      **Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

**Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes culvert replacement at seven (7) locations on State Route 152 and I-5 in Merced County. General scope of work is listed in the Continuation Sheet. All work will be within Caltrans Right of Way. The purpose of the project is to address the deteriorated drainage system and to extend the service life of State Route 152 and I-5. The project is needed to prevent potential failure of the overlying highway due to the culvert deterioration.

**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 1.** (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**

Elizabeth Hummel

Print Name

*Elizabeth Hummel*

Signature

09/05/2024

Date

**Project Manager**

Jason Miller

Print Name

*Jason Miller*

Signature

9/5/2024

Date



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

[X] 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)(Enter activity number)
[ ] 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
[ ] Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

[ ] 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

Print Name Signature Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Print Name Signature Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 9/5/2024

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).



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

### Continuation sheet:

Construction activities include removing existing culverts, trenching/excavation, backfill, flared end sections and swale/ditches added to the inlet and outlet. The scope of work at each location will include the following:

County	Route	Postmile	Scope	
1	MER	5	18.03	Replace existing 24" reinforced concrete pipes (RCP) with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. Flare end section (FES) at inlet and outlet will be installed. Install G1 inlet at junction in the median. Overside drain will be replaced.
2	MER	5	18.03	Replace existing 24" RCP with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. FES at inlet and outlet will be installed. Overside drain will be replaced.
3	MER	5	18.88	Replace existing 24" RCP with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. Install G1 inlet at junction in the median. FES will be installed at outlet. Replace overside drain located near outlet.
4	MER	152	16.59	Replace the 1.0' rise by 1.8' span corrugated steel elliptical pipe that is connected to a 2' reinforced concrete pipe with 1.0' rise by 1.8' span elliptical corrugated steel pipe (CSP). Removed existing FES and install metal FES at inlet.
5	MER	152	17.48	Replace existing 24" CSP with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. Install manhole at junction in the median. Install concrete FES at inlet and outlet.
6	MER	152	17.48	Replace existing 24" CSP with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. Install manhole at junction in the median. Install concrete FES at inlet and outlet.
7	MER	152	R33.97	Replace existing 18" CSP with 24" RCP with rubber gasket joints. Install FES at inlet and outlet. Add rock slope project and create a ditch.

### **General:**

- Environmental reevaluation will be required if the scope of the project changes to include additional areas or activities, or if previously unknown cultural or other sensitive resources are discovered. Contact the Environmental Office if project changes occur or sensitive resources discovered.



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

### Cultural:

- If cultural materials are discovered at the job site, do not disturb the resources and immediately:
  1. Stop all work within a 60-foot radius of discovery
  2. Protect the discovery area
  3. Notify the Engineer
  4. The Department Investigates.
    - a. Do not move cultural materials or take them from the job site. Retain a qualified archaeologist to assess the significance of the find. Do not resume work within the discovery area until authorized.
- If human remains are discovered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County coroner contacted. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). At the same time the landowner will work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

### Hazardous Waste:

- The Caltrans Standard Special Provision 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii), which pertains to Earth Material Containing Lead, shall be added to the construction contract. A Lead Compliance Plan prepared by a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) is required and all soil must remain on-site.
- Caltrans Standard Specification (SSP) 36-4 will be added to the construction contract for removing non-hazardous striping/pavement markings.

### Biology:

The following avoidance and minimization measure will be implemented.

- For location 4 (MER/152/16.59) location 5/6 (MER/152/17.78) location 7 (MER/152/R33.97), if construction will occur during migratory bird season (February 1 – September 30th), a pre-construction bird survey will be required around the project area. If an active bird nest is observed, a 100' buffer will be established around the nest until the young have fledged. SSP 14-6.03A will be added to the construction contract to request a 300' buffer be established around any active hawk nest that is observed. A 600' buffer would be established for Swainson's hawk. Contractors must submit a request to the Caltrans District 10 Environmental Office to have a qualified Caltrans biologist conduct a nesting bird



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

survey within 14 days prior to the start of any construction related activities. Construction activities will not begin until authorized. If approved, construction related activities must commence within 14 days of a location's nesting bird survey completion. If the contractors fail to commence the construction related activities within 14 days, or if there is a halt to the activities with a delay of more than 14 days, another nesting bird survey must be performed by the Caltrans qualified biologist. Construction cannot recommence until authorized.

- Special Standard Specification 14-10.01 shall be included in the contract. All food related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps will be disposed of in closed containers and removed daily from the construction site.
- Giant Garter Snake (GGS) could use the general area in a transient capacity. Within locations 5 and 6 (MER/152/17.48) and location 7 (MER/152/R33.97), implement SSP 14-6.03A:
  1. A qualified Caltrans biologist must conduct pre-construction GGS survey within 14 days prior to the start of any construction related activities. If work does not begin within 14 days of the cleared pre- construction survey, or if there is a halt to the activities with a delay of more than 14 days, a follow-up survey performed by a qualified Caltrans biologist will need to be conducted prior to the start of construction related activities. Construction cannot commence or recommence until authorized by the Caltrans District 10 Environmental Office.
  2. Silt net fencing will be installed to fully encompass the unpaved inlet and outlet action areas. The silt net fencing is marked on the plans. The bottom edge of the fencing shall be installed at least six inches below the ground surface and soil shall be compacted against both sides of the fence to prevent snakes from entering the action area under the fence. Fencing shall consist of taught silt fencing supported by wooden stakes on the Project side only. Fencing shall extend between 12 to 18 inches above the ground. A qualified Caltrans biologist will be present to oversee and approve the installation of the silt net fencing prior to construction. Silt net fencing locations and configurations are included in attached KMZ file.
  3. Excavations or holes deeper than 2 feet will be covered with plywood or similar material at the end of each workday to prevent any entrapment. Each excavation or hole will be inspected thoroughly before being filled.
  4. All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of 4 inches or greater stored on the construction site overnight will be thoroughly inspected for species prior to being buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved.
  5. If at any time a trapped or injured GGS is discovered, stop all work immediately and contact the Resident Engineer and Caltrans D10 Environmental Office for further instruction. No work shall continue until authorized by the Caltrans D10 Environmental Office or until the animal leaves the project limits on its own. Any contractor, employee, or agency personnel who inadvertently kills or injures a GGS must immediately



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
DETERMINATION FORM**

report the incident to the Resident Engineer and Caltrans D10  
Environmental Office.

No Permits Required