

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Trinity

From: (Public Agency): California Department of Transportation
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901

(Address)

Project Title: Middle-Mile Broadband Network Hub No 2. Geotechnical Drilling Project (EA: 02-4J570)

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation- District 3

Project Location - Specific:

State Route 299 at post mile 48.1 in Trinity County.

Project Location - City: Near Weaverville Project Location - County: Trinity

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct geotechnical drilling to determine subsurface composition for a proposed broadband network hub retaining wall on State Route 299 at post mile 48.1 in Trinity County.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Caltrans

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: Class 6, Section 15306
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource are categorically exempt under CEQA Section 15306- Information Collection.

Lead Agency Dotrik Wilson (530) 821-3054
Contact Person: _____ Area Code/Telephone/Extension: _____

If filed by applicant:

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

Signature: *Dotrik Wilson* Date: 9/18/2024 Title: Branch Chief

■ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Middle-Mile Broadband Network Hub No. 2 Geotechnical Drilling

DIST-CO-RTE: 02-TRI-299

PM/PM: 48.1

EA: 02-4J570

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct geotechnical drilling to determine subsurface composition for a proposed broadband network hub retaining wall on State Route 299 at post mile 48.1 in Trinity County. Three borings would be drilled to a depth of approximately 30 feet using a mud rotary self-casing drilling system and/or auger drilling system.

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 e)
- Categorically Exempt. Class 6.** (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

Dotrik Wilson	<i>Dotrik Wilson</i>	9/4/2024
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Kelly Zolotoff	<i>Kelly M Zolotoff</i>	9/16/2024
Print Name	Signature	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 6 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

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 09/03/2024

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:

The mud drilling system requires use of drilling fluid to maintain boring stability, bring drill cuttings to the surface, as well as lubricate and cool the drill bit. Drilling fluid may be made up of water mixed with bentonite clay, liquid polymer, or a mixture of both.

The drilling fluid would be contained and recirculated through a closed system utilizing drill rods and a mud tank. The mud tank would be positioned on the ground surface to serve as a settlement tank for the soil cuttings, which would be periodically removed and placed in 55-gallon steel drums.

In the event of an unexpected fluid spill, drilling would stop and escaping fluids would be contained. Any fluid that leaks onto the ground would be collected using absorbent pads or other absorbent material. The used pads and material would then be placed in 55-gallon drums for disposal.

Once drilling is complete, the mud tank would be cleaned of all drill cuttings and fluids by pumping and/or shoveling into a 55-gallon drum. Any residual drill cuttings left on the ground surface would be shoveled into a 55-gallon drum as well. All borings would be properly sealed and destroyed by the drill crew in accordance with drilling permit requirements and may be backfilled with cement slurry or a mixture of cement and bentonite clay.

Drilling is anticipated to last approximately two weeks and occur during both daytime and nighttime hours. One-way reversing traffic control may be required during drilling operations.

Right of Way/Staging

All work and staging would occur within the existing Caltrans right of way.

Disposal/Borrow

No borrow is needed. Drill cutting and fluids would be properly disposed at an appropriate location.

Consultation/Coordination

Consultation was conducted with numerous Native American Tribes. No issues have currently been identified.

Permits/Approvals

No environmental permits or approvals are required.