

Riverside County Sheriff's Office
3403 10th Street, Riverside, CA 92501

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

October 15, 2024

Project Name: Riverside County Sheriff's Office (RSO) Cois M. Byrd Detention Center (CBDC) Kitchen Food Equipment Replacement Project

Project Number: RSO-PMO- FFE-24-0119

Project Location: 30755-B Auld Road, Murrieta, California 92563; Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 963-080-013

Description of Project: One of the Detentions Centers the RSO manages is the Cois M. Byrd Detention Center, located at 30755-B Auld Road Murrieta, California 92563. The facility houses approximately 1,200 inmates annually and has an important responsibility of ensuring the inmates receive safe, nutritious, and adequate food daily for their well-being. The kitchen serves over 1,300,000 meals to inmates and staff annually. The kitchen equipment the facility uses to prepare food is aging and many have reached end-of-life. This Project will include replacing the existing deteriorating kitchen equipment with in-kind capacity industrial equipment to ensure continued nutritional services to inmates and related electrical upgrades. This project involves key consideration to ensure optimum function of food equipment and reliability for meal preparations, to ensure efficiency, safety, and compliance with regulations specific to correctional facilities. The replacement of the kitchen food equipment at the CBDC is identified as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The operation of the facility will continue to provide public services and will not result in a change or expansion of existing use. No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Riverside County Sheriff's Office

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Sheriff's Office

Exempt Status: State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15301 Existing Facilities Exemption; and 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption, Codified under Title 14, Articles 5 and 19, Sections 15061 and 15301.

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 include unusual circumstances which could have the possibility of having 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 improvements to the kitchen food equipment at the CBDC facility in Murrieta.

- **Section 15301 (b)–Existing Facilities:** This Class 1 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 renovations to make the kitchen functional as the kitchen food equipment has deteriorated due to age and wear. The use of the facilities would continue to provide public services and would not result in a significant increase in capacity or intensity of use. Therefore, the project is exempt as it meets the scope and intent of the Categorical 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 renovations to update the kitchen equipment to make it functional will not result in any direct or indirect physical environmental impacts. The improvements would occur within existing facility, would not alter the footprint and are being completed to create a compliant and safe health facility. The use of the facility for public services would remain unchanged. 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.

Based upon the identified exemptions above, the County of Riverside 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: 10-15-2024

Mike Sullivan, Senior Environmental Planner
County of Riverside