



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Mendocino 162 Middle-Mile Broadband Network Project

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-MEN-162

PM/PM: 0.0/29.6

EA: 01-0M192

Federal-Aid Project Number:

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in coordination with the California Department of Technology, proposes to install broadband infrastructure consisting of conduit, fiber optic cable, vaults, and markers on State Route (SR) 162 between post miles (PM) 0.0 to 29.6 in Mendocino County. Caltrans is coordinating with the Bureau of Land Management where the project crosses into federal lands along SR 162 between PM 17.36 to 19.67.

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 21080.51.)
- Categorically Exempt. Class** Enter class. (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

Dotrik Wilson

10/1/2024

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Brian Finck

Brian Finck

October 2, 2024

Print Name

Signature

Date



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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

N/A Print Name, N/A Signature, N/A Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

N/A Print Name, N/A Signature, N/A Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable):
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 06/24/2024

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).



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Continuation sheet:

Purpose

This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project would install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System and Interstate System necessary to connect to a third-party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which would bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Need

In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring equitable high-speed broadband service to all Californians. The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's unserved and underserved communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support these communities in providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Scope of Work

Work includes the following:

- Placement of temporary traffic control devices and signage.
- Removal of minor vegetation and trees.
- Installation of underground two-inch diameter high-density polyethylene conduit.
- Installation of underground fiber optic cable.
- Installation of approximately 30-inches-wide by 48-inches-long by 36-inches-deep pull vaults approximately every 2,400 feet along the fiber optic conduit path.
- Installation of approximately 48-inches-wide by 48-inches-long by 36-inches-deep splice vaults approximately every 12,000 feet along the fiber optic conduit path.
- Installation of metallic disk markers approximately every 500 feet along conduit path in paved areas.
- Installation of flexible post delineators approximately every 500 feet along conduit path in unpaved areas.
- Placement of cement slurry back fill, cold planning to a depth of approximately 0.25 inches, and placement of an approximately 48-inch-wide hot mix asphalt overlay.
- Application of temporary and permanent erosion control.

Right of Way/Staging

All work and staging would occur within existing Caltrans right of way or easements. Approximate locations for potential staging are as follows:

- PM 0.25- Approximately 32,925 square feet unpaved grassy area.
- PM 11.35- Approximately 7,530 square feet unpaved area.
- PM 11.42- Approximately 18,120 square feet unpaved area.



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- PM 21.24- Approximately 9,370 square feet unpaved area.

Disposal/Borrow

Surplus excavated material would be disposed at PM 21.22 on approximately 9,265 square feet unpaved area. No material borrow site is needed.

Consultation/Coordination

Consultation was initiated with the numerous Native American Tribes. No issues have currently been identified. Consultation is on-going.

Permits/Approvals

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence for northern spotted owl on June 6, 2023. A grant of right of way from Bureau of Land Management would be required for installation of broadband infrastructure within the existing Caltrans easement located along SR 162 between PM 17.36 to 19.67.