



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

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| <p><b><u>Project Information</u></b></p> <p><b>Project Name (if applicable):</b> State Route 59 Pavement Anchor Project</p> <p><b>DIST-CO-RTE:</b> 10-MER-059</p> <p><b>PM/PM:</b> 14.1-14.763/14.78-16.3</p> <p><b>EA:</b> 10-1M480      <b>Federal-Aid Project Number:</b> 1020000177</p> <p><b><u>Project Description</u></b></p> <p>Caltrans proposes to preserve and extend the pavement service life within the project limit through a Capital Preventative Maintenance project.</p> |
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**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(c).** (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**

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|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Laura Cook</u> | <u><i>Laura N. Cook</i></u> | <u>11/17/2023</u> |
| Print Name        | Signature                   | Date              |

**Project Manager**

|                   |                          |                   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Charlie Do</u> | <u><i>Charlie Do</i></u> | <u>11/20/2023</u> |
| Print Name        | Signature                | Date              |



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

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)(26)
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

Laura Cook (Print Name), Laura N. Cook (Signature), 11/17/2023 (Date)

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Charlie Do (Print Name), Charlie Do (Signature), 11/20/2023 (Date)

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): Enter date
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: Enter date

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 and Need:**

The purpose of this project is to restore the facility to a state of good repair, to improve ride quality, to provide Traffic Management System elements, and to meet ADA requirements on State Route 59 in Merced in Merced County.

The project is needed because the existing asphalt concrete pavement shows signs of deterioration that has resulted in rough riding surface and higher maintenance cost. The existing facility lacks the Traffic Management System elements to enable the Traffic Management Center to monitor roadway conditions. Existing pedestrian facilities within the project limits do not meet current ADA standards.

### **Description of work:**

Caltrans proposes to preserve and extend the pavement service life within the project limit through a Capital Preventative Maintenance project. The project is located on State Route 59 in Merced County, in the City of Merced, south of the State Route 59/W Childs Avenue intersection, at the intersection of State Route 59/State Route 99, and from the intersection of State Route 59/State Route 99 on V Street to just north of South Fork Black Rascal Creek near the State Route 59/Santa Fe Drive intersection. The scope of work includes cold plane of existing pavement; digouts to repair localized areas of severe failure; sealing cracks; repairing, replacing, and upgrading asphalt concrete dikes and curbs; adding shoulder backing; upgrading Americans with Disabilities Act ramps; replacing existing drainage grates with bicycle-proof grates where needed; and signal work at the following three intersections:

- State Route 59/15th Street
- State Route 59/16th Street
- State Route 59/Santa Fe Drive/Olive Avenue

Temporary construction easements are anticipated at 100 locations to conform or upgrade curb ramps and driveways with the sidewalk. The scope of work includes structures on or adjacent to the proposed right of way. It is unknown if material or disposal sites would be needed.

### **General:**

The project is Categorical Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act and Categorical Excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act unless: (1) the scope of the project changes to include additional activities or areas; or (2) there is unforeseen discovery of sensitive or cultural resources. Environmental reevaluation will be required if either of these conditions are met.



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### **Air:**

The SR 59 Pavement Anchor project is in Merced County in the San Joaquin Valley, which is in non-attainment for PM 2.5 and attainment/maintenance for PM 10. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Transportation Conformity Guidance, PM2.5 hot-spot analysis is required for Projects of Air Quality Concern (POAQC) in non-attainment and maintenance areas (40CFR 93.123 (b) (1)). Projects that are exempt or not POAQC do not require hot-spot analysis.

The proposed project is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. According to 40 CFR Section 93.126, the proposed project is exempt under Table 2 – “Pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation”. Such projects may proceed toward implementation even in the absence of a conforming transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Operational climate change emissions do not need to be estimated because the project is not capacity increasing. This project is not expected to cause any operational effects on air pollutants.

### **Biology:**

Based on the current scope and description of the proposed project, no state or federally-listed species; designated critical habitat; state or federally recognized sensitive habitats, or potential waters of the U.S. associated within this geographic region will be impacted or affected by the proposed project as long as the description of the proposed project as described in "Project Description" remains unchanged. Additionally, Army Corps of Engineer, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or Regional Water Quality Control Board permits will not be required for the proposed project.

### **Cultural:**

Based on the review of the proposed project there is no potential to affect historic properties or historical resources eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. As a result, this undertaking is exempt from further review, no additional archaeological or built environmental studies are required at this time and the Section 106 compliance process and the CEQA cultural resources component are complete.

### **Hazardous Waste:**

There is one open LUST site adjacent to the project area. The site is eligible for closure. There are 15 closed LUST sites adjacent to the project area. All sites have been appropriately remediated and received No Further Action Required (NFAR) letters from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. In addition, the scope of work



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in the vicinity of these sites is limited to removal of existing asphalt or cement sidewalks and incidental excavation required to construct upgraded sidewalks. Therefore, the potential to encounter contaminated soil is considered minimal.

### **Noise:**

The proposed project, as stated above, will not likely to introduce a potential for long term traffic noise impacts as described in the Type I projects under section 3 of Caltrans' Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol (Protocol, 2011). Therefore, this is not considered a Type I project. However, during construction, the project should comply with Caltrans Standard Specification regarding construction noise.

### **Paleontology:**

Based on the information from the project, the 2000, California State University, Fresno, Department of Geology Paleontological Sensitivity Mapping Project database lists this area as having low sensitivity. In addition, the project is located in a highly disturbed roadway facility and excavation beyond the existing road base is not anticipated. Therefore, the potential to encounter significant paleontological resources as a result of this project is considered low. No further studies are need at this time.

### **Water:**

By incorporating proper and accepted engineering practices and BMPs, the proposed project will not have significant impacts on water quality during construction or its operation. Because of the proposed project, it is our opinion that no further investigation concerning water quality is needed to proceed with the project. If the scope of work changes, please request an additional investigation for this project.

### **Environmental Justice:**

Since this project is a rehabilitation of existing facilities, including upgrading asphalt concrete dikes and curbs; adding shoulder backing; upgrading Americans with Disabilities Act ramps; replacing existing drainage grates with bicycle-proof grates, and by research using the Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (Ver. 2020), Caltrans has determined no minority or low-income populations would be affected by the proposed project have been identified as determined above. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898.