

State of California
 Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
 GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

**California Environmental Quality Act
 Notice of Exemption**

To: Office of Planning & Research
 State Clearinghouse
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
 Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
 715 P Street, MS 1803
 Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: 493556_Aera_UIC

Project Applicant: Aera Energy LLC (A0610)

Project Location: Kern, South Belridge; 02/29S/21E/MD; 35.43341780 / -119.68363250

Project Description: The proposed project activity is to plugback with cement and perforate the existing 8333A-2 waterflood well. The duration of the project is approximately four days, and temporary equipment, such as a workover rig, will be utilized.

API #	Well Name
0403061191	Belridge V 8333A-2

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type	Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)
<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Exemption:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Project (<i>pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973</i>)	21169	15261 (b)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268
<input type="checkbox"/> Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Categorical Exemption:	21084		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 1: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 3: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 7: Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 8: Protection of the Environment		15308	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 11: Accessory Structures		15311	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 21: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 30: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 33: Small Habitat Restoration Projects	15333		
<input type="checkbox"/>	General Exemption ("common sense")		15061 (b)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not a "Project" subject to CEQA		15378 (b)(2)	
<p>CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR § 15300.2): where project is located (e.g., sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.</p>				

Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1): Class 1 applies to the rework activities. Class 1 consists of “the operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration” of existing facilities involving “negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing previously.” (§ 1684.1) The proposed Project is to reconstruct an existing waterflood well by plugging back using cement and perforating within the existing well structure. This proposed Project is a rework that will maintain an existing level of service and operations. The well will return to the same operations as historical operations, which is waterflood. This rework will use temporary equipment, such as a workover rig, confirmed to fit within the existing wellpad. This proposed Project is a minor alteration involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond previously existing. CalGEM engineer has confirmed the use of the well and capacity of the operation is limited by the existing permits for UIC project code 052-00-016 and the engineering summary indicates the proposed work is within the scope of those approvals.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302): Class 2 applies because the rework of the well could be considered “replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity.” This rework involves reconstructing an existing waterflood well by plugging it back with cement and perforating before returning the well to operation. The NOI does not propose changes to the well's purpose, capacity, or structure (the wellbore). The rework will not expand the facility or construct any additional facilities. This proposed rework will maintain the well's existing level of service and operations and return it to its historical operations. CalGEM engineer has reviewed the existing UIC permit 052-00-016 and confirmed that the proposed work is within the scope of the UIC project, and the use of the well and its capacity are limited by the existing permit.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2): Class 4 applies because the rework “consists of drilling operations that result in only minor alterations with negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation.” The proposed project will take place on an existing well pad in the South Belridge oilfield, utilizing current access roads with no new road construction needed. There will be no alterations to the surface topography, and no grading will take place. The reworks are intended to maintain the current level of service and will not involve expanding the facility. All proposed activities and temporary equipment will be confined to the existing well pad. As a result, the operator indicates that there will be no temporary or permanent disturbance to habitats that could potentially impact listed species. There are no expected impacts on biological resources as the project will not disturb undisturbed areas.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, there is no substantial evidence that there are any “unusual circumstances” associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there are no significant “cumulative impacts” resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

Consistent with the purposes of PRC § 3250 et seq. and the documentation available for the preliminary review, the proposed project will benefit the environment. In addition, the work under the contracts and any resulting impacts will be temporary in duration. Therefore, the project can be considered exempt from the need for full CEQA review.

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials can be made available to the public by contacting the CalGEM CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, MS 1803, Sacramento, CA 95814; by calling (916) 445-9686; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting CEQA@conservation.ca.gov. The notice filed with the State Clearinghouse may be accessed online at: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov>

Certified: *Charmane Robinson*
Department of Conservation,
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