

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: 609527_Group_Aera_OG

Project Applicant: Aera Energy LLC (Aera)

Project Location: Fresno County, Coalinga Oil Field; 34/19S/15E/MD;
 36.23089981, -120.32950592

Project Description: Aera proposes to rework an existing well located in the Coalinga Oil Field. The proposed rework consists of installing inner casing and returning the well to production.

The entirety of this work is in an area of existing disturbance and no change in the surface topography (such as drainage patterns) is included in the work design. No new grading will occur in undisturbed areas. Regular operations at the site would include removal of weeds and other ruderal vegetation for fire control and road maintenance. No new permanent facilities will be constructed to accomplish the proposed activities, and there will be no expansion to the existing facilities.

The administrative grouping initially proposed reworking 2 wells. Of the 2 wells, 1 well was determined to have integrity issues that required swift action for the protection of public health, safety, and the environment and therefore received an expedited review. The work was approved with a prior exemption and the optional NOE was not filed. The scope of this review is the rework of the remaining 1 well from the initial administrative grouping. The well that received an expedited review is listed below.

API #	Well Name
0401920679	S29-759A

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) approving one permit for Aera to rework the well listed below, in the Coalinga Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0401901413	S34-52

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)	
<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>			

Reasons 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): The project is exempt under the Class 1, Existing Facilities exemption because the project would make minor changes to an existing well involving no expansion of the existing use of the well. Class 1 consists of the "minor alteration" of existing facilities "involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use." (14 CCR § 15301.) This includes "alteration of well casing, such as

perforating and casing repair." Additionally, in accordance with 14 CCR § 1684.1 the Class 1 exemption consists of operation, repair, maintenance, minor alternation of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing previously. This Class includes but is not limited to conversion, and abandonment work on oil, gas, injection, and geothermal wells involving the alteration of well casing, such as perforating and casing repair, removal, or replacement; installation or removal of downhole production or injection equipment, cement plugs, bridge plugs, and packers set to isolate production or injection intervals. The project will include installing inner casing and returning the well to production. No expansion of the existing well pad, roads, staging areas, or pipelines are proposed, and the completion design will be the same as the original wellbore. Therefore, the changes to the existing facilities would be negligible and would not expand the existing use.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302): Class 2 exemption applies because it consists of "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 as the structure replaced[.]" Examples of Class 2 include, but are not limited to, "[r]eplacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity." The project will include installing inner casing and returning the well to production, and the completion design will be the same as the original wellbore. Therefore, the proposed project consists of replacement or reconstruction and would not change the purpose or capacity of the well.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2): Class 4 exemption applies. The proposed project would be conducted entirely on an existing pad with enough space to contain all equipment. The project will include installing inner casing and returning the well to production, and the completion design will be the same as the original wellbore. No expansion of the existing well pad, roads, staging areas, or pipelines are proposed. The proposed project is located within an industrial area. Therefore, the proposed project "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."

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.

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>

