

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: 583751_Group_SoCalGas_UGS_PA

Project Applicant: Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas)

Project Location: Los Angeles County, Playa Del Rey Oil Field; 27/02S/15W/SB;
 Latitude 33.97126770, Longitude -118.44314575

Project Description: The proposed project would abandon two observation wells. The proposed work would include operations to plugback the wells with cement to surface, perforate the casing as needed, cement squeeze through holes to isolate zones, cut and recover production casing, and place abandonment mud between cement plugs. Surface lines and all rig anchors will be removed, and the wellsites will be restored upon completion. This work will be performed at the wellsites within the SoCalGas facilities. Rig anchors are located within the work area boundaries and minimal excavation will be utilized. Emission avoidance guidelines will be followed. Temporary equipment such as a workover rig, tanks, bins, and pumps will be needed during workover operations. The expected duration of this project is estimated to be about 16 weeks. There are no plans for expansion or construction of any associated facilities. Waste materials will be properly disposed of as non-hazardous or hazardous waste and sent to the proper waste facility for disposal.

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) approving two permits for Southern California Gas Company to abandon the wells listed below, in the Playa Del Rey Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0403714019	Del Rey 14
0403714024	Del Rey 19

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 proposed project is exempt under the Class 1, Existing Facilities exemption because the project would make minor alterations to two observation wells in order to abandon the wells. Class 1 consists of the "operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing previously." This includes "remedial, maintenance, 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." (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1.). The proposed well work would include operations to plugback two wells by cementing to surface,

perforating the casing as needed, cement squeezing through holes to isolate zones, cutting and recovering production casing, and placing abandonment mud between cement plugs. The project would not expand the existing use of the wells. The project would permanently seal the wells, resulting in the discontinuation of their use.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302):

The proposed project is exempt under the Class 2, Replacement and Reconstruction exemption because the project would reconstruct the wellbores of two observation wells in order to abandon the wells. Class 2 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[.]” (14 CCR § 15302.). The proposed project would reconstruct the wellbores and casing of two observation wells by plugging the wells with cement, perforating the casing as needed, cement squeezing through holes to isolate zones, cutting and recovering production casing, and placing abandonment mud between cement plugs. The project would be located on existing well pads and would not expand the existing use of the wells. The project would permanently seal the wells, resulting in the discontinuation of their use.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2):

The proposed project is exempt under the Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land exemption because the project would make minor alterations to two observation wells with negligible effects to the surrounding environment. Class 4 consists of “drilling operations that result only in minor alterations with negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation.” (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2.). The well pads are large enough to accommodate the necessary equipment and can be accessed by existing roads. The project does not involve the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities. The project would take place on well pads located within the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve; however, biological surveys provided in the record demonstrate that the proposed disturbance areas are non-wetland. Rig anchors would be removed, which involves excavation in front of the rig anchor approximately six to eight feet wide and five feet deep, followed by efforts to pull anchor free. The rig anchors are located within the boundary of the well pads; therefore, any excavation work would take place on previously disturbed, non-wetland work areas. This work is meant to abandon the wells and would ultimately result in the cessation of work in the project area. Therefore, the project would not result in any surface disturbance that would significantly impact the surrounding environment.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2 (c)) referenced above. 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. The approved project is within a Health Protection Zone (HPZ) as defined by Public Resources Code (PRC) section 3280(b). The HPZ does not present an unusual circumstance because SB 1137 (PRC § 3280 et seq.) requires all oil or gas production facilities or wells with a wellhead within an HPZ to comply with specified health, safety, and environmental requirements. In addition, CalGEM further finds that there are no

significant “cumulative impacts” resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemption(s) 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>

Certified: _____ *Mikayla Vaba* _____ **Date:** _____ 2/6/2025 _____
Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division