

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Submission of this form is optional. The form shall be filed with the County Clerk pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21168(d), the filing of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on Court challenges to the approval of the project. Failure to file the notice results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

TO: Office of Planning and Research P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044	TO: Los Angeles County Clerk 12400 Imperial Highway Norwalk, CA 90650
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FROM (LEAD AGENCY AND APPLICANT ADDRESS):

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)
111 North Hope Street, Room 1044
Los Angeles, CA 90012

PROJECT TITLE:

Chatsworth Reservoir Flood Control Channel Tree Removal

PROJECT LOCATION: 23234 Valley Circle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 91311	CITY: Los Angeles	COUNTY: Los Angeles
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DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT:
The proposed Project is limited to the removal of two valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) trees causing significant displacement to the walls of a flood control channel. The channel is critical infrastructure that protects the Chatsworth Reservoir and surrounding community from flooding during storm events. Failure to remedy the situation may result in further displacement of the channel walls, creating a pathway for possible head cutting and structural failure. If stormflows are allowed to infiltrate behind the channel walls, significant erosion of the underlying soil will occur, increasing the likelihood of wall failure and potential catastrophic flooding.

CONTACT PERSON: David Norris	TELEPHONE NUMBER: 213-367-3509
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EXEMPT STATUS: Categorical Exemption	SECTION: 15301 (h)
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JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), This Project is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301 (h) Existing Facilities, which "consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use ... [including] maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs"

LEAD AGENCY SIGNATURE:  Jane A. Hauptman	TITLE: Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment	DATE: 01/31/2025
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Basis for Categorical Exemption

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) determined based on the whole of the administrative record that the project is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.

Project Description

The Project site is located within the LADWP owned Chatsworth Reservoir Property in the City of Los Angeles, California (Figure 1, Regional Map). The proposed project is located 8 miles north of Woodland Hills and 32 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles in western Los Angeles County (Figure 1). Specifically, the project site extends along a flood control channel that begins within the Project site and terminates at Carla Lane (Figure 2, Project Location Map). The Project site occurs within the City of Los Angeles jurisdiction.

The proposed Project is limited to the removal of two valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) trees causing displacement of the flood control channel walls. The flood channel is critical infrastructure that protects the Chatsworth Reservoir and surrounding community from flooding during storm events. Failure to remedy the situation may result in further displacement of the channel walls, creating a pathway for possible head cutting and structural failure. If stormflows are allowed to infiltrate behind the channel walls, significant erosion of the underlying soil will occur, increasing the likelihood of wall failure and potential catastrophic flooding.

Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act

The Class 1 Categorical Exemption allows for the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use. In accordance with this section, the maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs are categorically exempt pursuant to Class 1(h) in CEQA Guidelines Section 15301. Therefore, the proposal to remove two native trees impacting drainage infrastructure within the Chatsworth Reservoir Facility is categorically exempt from CEQA.

Consideration of Potential Exceptions to use of a Categorical Exemptions

CEQA Guidelines in Section 15300.2 limit the use of categorical exemptions in the following six circumstances:

1. Location: Exemption Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located - a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may be significant in a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply to all instances except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

This exception only applies to Class 3 (existing facilities), Class 4 (minor alterations to land), Class 5 (minor alterations in land use limitations), Class 6 (information collection), or Class 11 (accessory structures) exemptions. This exception does not apply to any other categorical exemption, such as the Class 1 used for this project; however, the project was still analyzed for impacts to sensitive environments as the project is located within the Chatsworth Reservoir Property which is part of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, the property is also designated as a Nature Preserve by the City of Los Angeles. The reservoir property site has been mapped for sensitive resources and none occur within the immediate vicinity of the project site. Impacts to sensitive environments are not anticipated as a result of this project; additionally, the removed trees will be replaced at a ratio of 4:1 or greater. Additional efforts to preserve habitat and manage biological resources are ongoing within the reservoir property, therefore this exception does not apply.

2. Cumulative Impact: All exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

There are no other projects planned which involve the removal of trees within the Chatsworth Reservoir Property. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

3. Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. A nesting bird survey will be conducted during the nesting bird season (February through August) and prior to any disturbance within the project area to document the presence or absence of nesting birds to ensure that no impacts would occur to nesting birds. Nesting bird surveys shall be conducted within 3 days of construction, and any nests discovered must be avoided during construction.

The Project does not conflict with the City of Los Angeles' Street Tree Removal Permit and Tree Replacement Condition Policies (Board of Public Works 2015), the City of Los Angeles' Protected Tree Ordinance (LAMC § 46.00 et seq.), nor any provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans.

The Project is not anticipated to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a biological resource. No reasonable possibility has been identified that the Project will have a significant effect on biological resources due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, no substantial adverse impact to biological resources is anticipated, and as such this exception does not apply.

4. Scenic Highway. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

The location of the tree removal was referenced against the database of scenic highways at ([https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways](https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways)) and no scenic highway is located within the vicinity of the Project or within the Project site. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

5. Hazardous Waste Site. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

The Project is not anticipated to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a hazardous waste site. No reasonable possibility has been identified that the Project will have a significant hazardous effect on the public or the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, no substantial adverse impact as a result of a hazardous waste site is anticipated. Furthermore, the Project site is not listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Sections 65962.5. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

6. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The Chatsworth Reservoir Property has been surveyed for cultural and historic resources and there are no known resources within the project footprint. No reasonable possibility has been identified that the Project will have a significant effect on cultural or historical resources due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, no substantial adverse impact to resources is anticipated, and as such this exception does not apply.



SOURCE: Bing Maps, OpenStreetMap

FIGURE 1
Project Location





SOURCE: Bing Maps, OpenStreetMap

Figure 2
Tree Locations and Removals

