

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: 641030_SPR_UIC

Project Applicant: Sentinel Peak Resources California LLC (SPR)

Project Location: Kern County, Cymric Oil Field; 06/30S/22E/MD;
35.34749222, -119.64885712

Project Description: SPR proposes to sidetrack one existing steamflood well located in the Cymric Oil Field. The project will include:

- Plugging back the existing wellbore with cement;
- Sidetracking to a similar depth as the existing wellbore; and
- Completing the sidetracked wellbore in the same reservoir as the original wellbore.

Work will require the following equipment:

- (1) Rig to pull/run tubing and lay the cement plug;
- (1) Rig to sidetrack the well and run casing; and
- (1) Bulk Truck and (1) Pump to plug back the existing wellbore and cement casing.

All travel to/from the project location will occur on established roadways and no expansion is required. The project is estimated to take 6 days to complete. The existing well pad can accommodate all associated equipment, materials storage, and operations including deliveries and personnel parking. The operator indicates that any undisturbed vegetation will be avoided, and all work will occur on the existing disturbed pad only. No expansion of the existing well pad, road, staging areas, or pipelines is required.

This work will involve removal of the existing aboveground piping and equipment adjacent to the well to allow for rig work. Upon completion of well work, the equipment will be reinstalled. Piping is connected to the existing infrastructure, and production will be stored and treated utilizing existing facilities. Electricity will be supplied from existing systems. No expansion of the existing piping or facilities is required.

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) approving a permit for SPR to sidetrack the well listed below, in the Cymric Oil Field in Kern County.

API #	Well Name
0402975283	McKittrick Unit 2-77

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)	
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.			

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 exemption consists of operation, repair, maintenance, or 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 includes "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 § 1684.1.) The project consists of plugging back the existing wellbore with cement; sidetracking to a similar depth as the existing wellbore; and completing the sidetracked wellbore in the same reservoir as the original wellbore. No expansion of the existing well pad, roads, staging areas, or pipelines are proposed. According to a CalGEM engineer, the proposed work is within the scope of UIC projects 19024022 and 19024128 and would be a continuation of operations within the confines of the UIC projects as permitted by the project approval letters (PALs). 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 the "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." (14 CCR § 15302.) The project would include plugging back the existing wellbore with cement; sidetracking to a similar depth as the existing wellbore; and completing the sidetracked wellbore in the same reservoir as the original wellbore. According to a CalGEM engineer, the proposed work is within the scope of UIC projects 19024022 and 19024128 and would be a continuation of operations within the confines of the UIC projects as permitted by the PALs. Therefore, the proposed project consists of replacement or reconstruction on the same site 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. 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 § 1684.2; see also 14 CCR § 15304.) The proposed project would be conducted entirely on an existing pad with enough space to contain all equipment. The project would include plugging back the existing wellbore with cement; sidetracking to a similar depth as the existing wellbore; and completing the sidetracked wellbore in the same reservoir as the original wellbore. No expansion of the existing well pad, roads, staging areas, or pipelines are proposed. The proposed project is located within a developed oil field. Therefore, the proposed project would 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>

Certified: _____ *Nicole Trezza* _____ **Date:** 2/18/2025
Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division