

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

California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation
 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: 638055_Group_CRPC_OG_UIC

Project Applicant: California Resources Production Corporation

Project Location: Kern County, Mount Poso Oil Field; 09/27S/28E/MD; Latitude 35.59931183, Longitude -118.96596527

Project Description: The project would sidetrack eight oil and gas production wells. The sidetracks involve cleaning out the wells, placing cement plugs, perforating, removing and installing new casing, installing a new conductor, directional drilling, and cementing casing. The wells would be sidetracked from the Pyramid Hill to Vedder production zone. One well would be temporarily deepened to the Walker formation for information gathering purposes and would recomplete in Vedder. The work would be located in an area of existing disturbance and no change in the surface topography would result. There will be no expansion of the existing well pads, roads, staging areas, or pipelines. No new grading would occur in any undisturbed areas. No new road construction or expansions would be required for the proposed project. Routine maintenance activities at the site would include removal of weeds and other ruderal vegetation for fire control and road maintenance.

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) approving eight permits for California Resources Production Corporation to sidetrack the wells listed below, in the Mount Poso Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0402912935	Vedder-Rall 28
0402976161	Vedder 861L
0403016651	Security 71L
0403016667	Vedder 68L
0403021636	Sarrett Fee 48C
0403067992	Vedder-Rall VEDDER RALL 1056LVH
0403016962	Glide-2 13E
0402964007	Vedder-Rall 377

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 it would make minor alterations to existing wells with negligible change in use. 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." (14 CCR § 1684.1.) The project would sidetrack eight oil and gas production wells. The proposed work includes cleaning out the wells, placing cement plugs, perforating, removing and installing new casing, installing a new conductor, directional drilling, and cementing casing. The sidetracks involve completion of the wells into a new production zone; however, this is a negligible change because, as stated by a CalGEM engineer, Pyramid Hill and Vedder are commonly produced together, and both are existing hydrocarbon zones that are currently producing. One well would be deepened to the Walker formation before recompleting in Vedder, however this is temporary deepening and is for information gathering purposes. A CalGEM engineer has confirmed that this work is within the scope of work in UIC projects 48815017 and 48815061 as permitted by the PALs. The State Water Resources Control Board review of these UIC projects indicates that the approved work would not have significant impacts on groundwater. Therefore, the project would have negligible subsurface impacts. The wells would remain production wells with substantially the same production capacity. These are negligible changes to the existing wells in order to continue resource development.

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

The proposed project is exempt under the Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction exemption because it would reconstruct the casing of existing wells with negligible changes to use. Class 2 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[.]" (14 CCR § 15302.) The proposed work includes cleaning out the wells, placing cement plugs, perforating, removing and installing new casing, installing a new conductor, directional drilling, and cementing casing. This is a reconstruction of the casing on existing wells that would make negligible changes in order to restore functionality and continue resource development. The sidetracks would take place on existing well pads which are large enough to accommodate the necessary equipment and can be accessed by existing roads. The project will use existing facilities, including pipelines, electrical lines, and roads. The wells would remain oil and gas production wells with substantially the same production capacity.

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 involves minimal new ground surface disturbance. 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 does not involve any surface disturbance activities that would significantly impact the surrounding environment. The sidetracks would take place on existing well pads which are large enough to accommodate the necessary equipment and can be accessed by existing roads. The wells are located in a densely developed oil field. The project will use existing facilities, including pipelines, electrical lines, and roads. The project does not involve the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities.

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

