

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: The Trustees of the California State University
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802-4210

Project Title: Verizon Monopole (Monopine) Cellular Communications Infrastructure

Project Location – Specific: Parking Lot R3, Sonoma State University, 1801 E. Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Project Location – City: Rohnert Park

Project Location – County: Sonoma County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project involves the installation and operation by Verizon of a new unmanned cellular communications facility on the Sonoma State University campus.

The project site is generally located in the northwestern-central portion of campus, at the northern end of residence hall Parking Lot R3, and along the western property line, west of Zinfandel Village and southwest of Cabernet Village student housing complexes. The project site will occupy the unpaved area south of a fenced yard containing the campus Wastewater Equalization Tank Structure (Campus Building No. 13) and associated equipment and west of the paved area.



Surrounding land uses include Parking Lot R3, Sonoma State University student housing on the campus to the north, east, and southeast; an undeveloped 15-foot campus sewer setback immediately to the west, with Rancho Cotate High School athletic fields located west of the setback and the fenced campus property line; single-family residences along Jasmine Circle approximately 725 feet to the northwest; and single-family residences on Rebecca Way and Roman Drive approximately 710 feet to the southwest. The nearest waterway is Cotate Creek, approximately 600 feet to the north.

Project equipment and infrastructure would include a 135-foot-tall "monopine" cellular tower designed and painted to resemble a pine tree for visual compatibility with the surrounding landscape. Equipment will include a central pole,

antennae, and pine “branches” and “socks” that obscure the pole and antennae starting at a height of 30 feet above grade; two outdoor equipment cabinets within an approximately 410-square-foot equipment cabinet lease area; a 30kW, 210-gallon diesel backup generator for use during emergencies and testing and emitting a maximum 53dB during operation; an ice bridge secured by 12-foot cables; and a 27-foot-square, 8-foot-tall split-face concrete masonry unit wall enclosure and 12-foot-wide access gate on the southern side, within which all Verizon equipment will be secured. Existing underground electrical lines west of the project site will require relocation to serve the facility. The project site and work area will not encroach into the 15-foot sewer setback along the western campus property line.

The project includes the execution of a lease agreement between Sonoma State University and Verizon to allow Verizon limited rights to access, test, and maintain its equipment.

The project will benefit the university and the larger community through the provision of more reliable wireless service and will also generate revenue for the university through the lease agreement.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: The Trustees of the California State University

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sonoma State University

The project is exempt from CEQA under the following authority:

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Section 15303); Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land (Section 15304)
- Statutory Exemption. State code number: _____
- Other: “Common Sense” Exemption (15061(b)(3))

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is categorically exempt under the Class 3 categorical exemption, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, which exempts construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. Section 15303(d) specifically exempts water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction. and Section 15303(e) specifically exempts accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences. The proposed cell tower and related equipment and infrastructure improvements are consistent with the Class 3 exemption criteria.

The project is also exempt under the Class 4 categorical exemption, Minor Alterations to Land, which exempts minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Section 15304 (1) specifically exempts grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, where such grading is not in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazards as delineated by the State Geologist, and Section 15304(f) specifically exempts minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored.

Finally, the project is exempt under the common sense exemption provided in Section 15061.(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which states that an activity is not subject to CEQA where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have significant effect on the environment.

The project does not meet any of the exceptions for using categorical exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2, which prohibits the use of categorical exemptions if a project would:

- a) Be located in a sensitive environment
- b) Have significant cumulative impacts
- c) Have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances
- d) Result in damage to scenic resources within an officially designated scenic highway
- e) Be located on a site included on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code
- f) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource

The project site is on the Sonoma State campus, within a developed surface parking lot and adjacent to existing campus infrastructure (e.g., the Wastewater Equalization Tank Structure) and campus student housing facilities. Neither the project site nor the project vicinity are considered sensitive environments. There are no unusual circumstances that could result in significant impacts; the project site is located in a utilitarian area of the campus, within a parking lot and adjacent to campus infrastructure. The project site does not lie within a designated or proposed scenic highway, nor would the cell tower be prominently visible from a designated or proposed scenic highway or roadway, due to distance and the presence of intervening development and vegetation. The project site is

not on a list of hazardous sites compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, nor does it contain historical resources.

Mitigation measures adopted in conjunction with the 2000 certification of the Sonoma State University Master Plan Revision EIR by the Trustees of the California State University are applicable to the project and shall be implemented and monitored.

Information considered and relied upon in the preparation of this Notice of Exemption may be reviewed by members of the general public at the Office of Facilities Management, Sonoma State University, 1801 E. Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park, CA 94928.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dana Twedell, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (707) 664-2317

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project: Yes No

Signature: *Anne Collins-Dalme* **Date:** February 26, 2025

Title: Director, Land Use Planning & Environmental Review

Signed by Lead Agency:

Signed by Applicant:

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.