

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 and 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: 492491_CREH_OG_UIC

Project Applicant: California Resources Elk Hills, LLC (CREH)

Project Location: Kern County, Buena Vista Oil Field; 01/32S/23E/MD;
35.17591476, -119.45285034

Project Description: CREH proposes to sidetrack 1 existing oil & gas well located in the Buena Vista Oil Field in Kern County. The proposed activity is expected to take approximately 17 operational days to complete all construction phases. The potential disturbance footprint would encompass an existing 20,000 square foot (100 ft x 200 ft) well pad. The entirety of this work would be located in an area of existing disturbance and no change in the surface topography (such as drainage patterns) would result. There will be no expansion of the existing well pad, 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 1 permit for CREH to sidetrack the well listed below, in the Buena Vista Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0402909646	363-1C

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).

pipelines are proposed. According to a CalGEM engineer, the proposed work is within the scope of UIC project 08006009 and would be a continuation of operations within the confines of the UIC project as permitted by the project approval letter (PAL). 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 partial abandonment of the existing damaged wellbore and sidetrack drilling of the well in the same zone of completion as the original wellbore. According to a CalGEM engineer, the proposed work is within the scope of UIC project 08006009 and would be a continuation of operations within the confines of the UIC project as permitted by the PAL. 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 partial abandonment of the existing damaged wellbore and sidetrack drilling of the well in the same zone of completion 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.lci.ca.gov>

