

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: 533484_Group_CREH_UIC

Project Applicant: California Resources Elk Hills, LLC

Project Location: Kern County, Elk Hills Oil Field; 29/30S/24E/MB; Latitude 35.28874300,
Longitude -119.41315900

Project Description: The proposed project would sidetrack seven existing oil and gas production wells in order to continue resource development. The proposed work includes placing cement plugs, installing new conductors, drilling, cementing casing, and perforating. The wells are completed in the SOZ formation and would be completed in the same zone. The SOZ formation is a known hydrocarbon zone that is currently in production. The wells would not be deepened. The proposed work would not modify UIC project 22800007. The project would be located in an area of existing disturbance and no change in the surface topography (such as drainage patterns) would result. There would be no expansion of the existing well pads, roads, staging areas, or pipelines. No new grading would occur in any undisturbed areas. 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 seven permit(s) for California Resources Elk Hills, LLC to sidetrack the wells listed below, in the Elk Hills Oil Field.

API #	Well Name
0402956685	Unspecified 85-29S
0403020999	Unspecified 62W-4G
0403030783	Unspecified 53X-29S
0403030784	Unspecified 74X-29S
0403031511	Unspecified 34NW-29S
0403048918	Unspecified 82W-17G
0403049197	Unspecified 64-29S

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):

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." This includes

“remedial, maintenance, conversion, and abandonment work on oil, gas, injection, and geothermal wells involving the 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 proposed project would make minor alterations to the wells, resulting in negligible expansion of use beyond that existing previously. The proposed project and related permit approval is consistent with the laws that govern the operations, including statutory and regulatory provisions that protect public health, safety, and the environment.

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

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 project would reconstruct the casing and wellbores of existing wells. The work would take place on the existing wellbores and well pads. The proposed work involves negligible change in use of the wells. The proposed project and related permit approval is consistent with the laws that govern the operations, including statutory and regulatory provisions that protect public health, safety, and the environment.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2):

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 involves negligible or no vegetation removal, expansion of the existing well pads, or ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no surface disturbance related activities that would significantly disturb the surrounding environment. The proposed project and related permit approval is consistent with the laws that govern the operations, including statutory and regulatory provisions that protect public health, safety, and the environment.

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://ceganet.opr.ca.gov>

Certified:

Mikayla Vaba

Date:

5/7/2025

Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division