



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

From: Community Development – Planning Division
505 Forest Avenue Laguna Beach, California 92651

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1. **APPLICANT:** City of Laguna Beach, 505 Forest Ave. Laguna Beach, CA, 92651
2. **LEAD AGENCY:** City of Laguna Beach, 505 Forest Ave. Laguna Beach, CA, 92651
3. **PROJECT PLANNER:** Louie Lacasella, Senior Administrative Analyst, llacasella@lagunabeachcity.net, (949) 497-0736
4. **PROJECT TITLE:** General Plan Amendment 25-0320
5. **PROJECT LOCATION:** Citywide
6. **DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT:**
General Plan Amendment 25-0320 to update and amend the City of Laguna Beach General Plan Safety Element to include the 2023 updated FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. On March 19, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed the draft element and recommended that the City Council adopt the general plan amendment.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to State California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15162, staff reviewed the adopted environmental document for the 1995 Safety Element, which was also referenced for the 2021 Safety Element update, and determined that a subsequent EIR or a Negative Declaration is not required for this update to the City's Safety Element in that substantial changes are not proposed to the draft document nor will the update involve new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, the circumstances to which the 1995 Safety Element was adopted have not changed, and no new information of substantial importance which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence has arisen since the prior environmental documents have been certified.

Additionally, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed General Plan Safety Element update has been determined to be not a project subject to CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2), 15061(b)(3) and 15378(a) in that the proposed amendments which are primarily limited to policy modifications and updates in compliance with Government Code Section 65302 (g)1 through 9 are not anticipated to result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, nor will the proposed changes have the potential for causing significant effect on the environment. (See also State CEQA Guidelines, 15378 [definition of project does not include general policy and procedure making, or organizational and administrative activities by the lead agency].) Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, "Significant effect on the environment" means "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant." The proposed Safety Element update is in compliance with current State General Plan requirements, will not substantially affect, potentially substantially affect, or change the City's land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic resources as all potential changes have been thoroughly considered and will act to protect the environment by minimizing the potential spread of wildfire or any other natural disasters, which are intended to result in the reduction of potential short and long-term community risks resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change, and other related hazards. Further, the Safety Element update is simply incorporating the already-adopted LHMP. It can be seen with certainty that the proposed actions will not result in any foreseeable or reasonably foreseeable development that may cause significant environmental impacts. Thus, no environmental review is required.

On May 7, 2025, the City Council of the City of Laguna Beach adopted the General Plan Amendment and found the Project exempt from CEQA.

- The project is not subject to CEQA because it "does not involve the exercise of discretionary power," or "will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment," or, "is not a project as defined in Section 15378 of the CEQA guidelines." (Sections 15060(c)(1), (2) & (3)); or,
- "The activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have

the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA” (Section 15061(b)(3)); or,

- The project is statutorily exempt; or,
- The project is categorically exempt per State CEQA Guidelines, sections 15060(C)(2), 15061(B)(3), and 15162.

7. Was a public hearing held by the Lead Agency to consider the exemption?

Yes No If yes, the date of the public hearing was: May 6, 2025.

Louie Lacasella

Louie Lacasella, Senior Administrative Analyst

May 7, 2025