CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)

Project Information

Project Name: SR-79 Drainage Rehabilitation

DIST-CO-RTE: 08-RIV-79 **PM/PM:** R10.0

EA: 08-1T620 **Project Number:** 0826000109 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

Project Description

Caltrans proposes to construct a concrete side ditch to convey runoff into a new drainage inlet, which will be connected to the existing drainage system via a culvert on State Route (SR) 79 at the intersection of Pourroy Road in Riverside County. The proposed project aims to rehabilitate drainage facilities to effectively address and reduce ponding issues along the northbound outside lane near post mile (PM) R10.0, which has relatively flat shoulder and roadside. There will be driving/parking off-pavement, equipment staging area, vegetation removal, and ground disturbance of up to 5 feet. Additionally, the relocation site of the existing signposts/sign within the project limits will be determined during PS&E. No work will be performed within the nearby channel, and all construction activities will be within Caltrans right-of-way (ROW).

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:
☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class** 1(c). (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
☒ No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.
☐ **Covered by the Common Sense Exemption**. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Kourtney Graves		11/19/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Matthew Sapp	Matthew Sapp	11/23/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

☒ **23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(Enter activity number)**
- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**
- ☒ **Activity 1 listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Kourtney Graves		11/19/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Matthew Sapp	Matthew Sapp	11/23/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 11-19-26
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 11-19-26

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

Continuation sheet:

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the project is to alleviate stormwater ponding along northbound SR-79 at PM R10.0. The need of the project is to address existing drainage deficiencies that cause recurring water ponding on the traveled way during storm events, degrading reliable highway operating conditions on the roadway.

AIR QUALITY

Memorandum: October 28, 2026.

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, the scope of the Project has been evaluated as an exempt project that falls under the broad category of exempt project type "*projects that correct, improve, or eliminate a hazardous location or feature*" listed under Table 1 of Caltrans Carbon Monoxide Protocol and Table 2 in 40 CFR § 93.126. All projects listed under these tables are exempt from conformity analysis. An air quality report is not needed. However, a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) analysis is needed for construction emissions.

Transportation Air Quality Conformity Findings Checklist: October 28, 2026.

The project is exempt from all project-level conformity requirements 40 CFR 93.126; Project type from Table 2: projects that correct, improve, or eliminate a hazardous location or feature.

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG)/CLIMATE CHANGE

Construction GHG Emissions Analysis Memorandum: October 28, 2026.

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, the CAL-CET2021 upgraded air modeling software was used to estimate construction Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are summarized below. The GHG estimates for construction emissions on-road/offsite operations have been deduced as Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO_2e) in 19 metric tons/year during the 30 days of construction activity. Please see GHG/Climate Change measures in the Environmental Commitments Record (ECR).

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Email: November 6, 2026.

In coordination with District Paleontology, no paleontological studies will be required for the project.

NOISE

Memorandum: November 4, 2026.

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, this project falls under Type III project categories of 23 CFR 772.7 in the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol. Per Traffic Analysis Protocol "Type III projects do not require a noise analysis." This is considered an exempt project. Hence, no noise study is needed.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **NOI-1:** SSP 14-8.02: Noise from job site activities must not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site activity from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. each day, and the noise level produced by the traffic on or by the construction activity can't exceed 52 dBA Leq interior noise levels in school facilities as defined under St & Hwy Code § 216.

- **NOI-2:** Add bid item 148005 Noise Monitoring to the cost estimate package with a lump sum amount of $5,000.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Initial Site Assessment (ISA) Checklist: November 19, 2026.

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, the hazardous waste potential for the project area is Low Risk. There will be treated wood waste and excavation within 15 feet of the highway shoulder.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **HW-1:** SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii): Earth material containing lead, include LCP 070030 if not used with the "ii" (for clearing, grubbing, excavating, trenching, grading, drilling, planting, construct foundations, installing signs and posts).

- **HW-2:** SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii): Lead Compliance Plan for Informational Submittal (construction signs, Emergency Projects), always use with SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) and use bid item 070031 (standard).

- **HW-3:** SSP 14-11.14: Management of Treated Wood Waste. Use bid item 141120.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Section 106 Compliance-Screened Undertaking Memorandum: October 27, 2026.

In coordination with District Cultural Studies, the studies for this undertaking were carried out in a manner consistent with Caltrans' regulatory responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800) and pursuant to the December 2024 *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Sacramento District, San Francisco District, and Los Angeles District, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California(Section 106 PA).*

The provisions of the Section 106 PA, Attachment 2, have been applied to this project. This project falls under Class 9, "Storm damage repairs, such as culvert clearing or repair, disposal or stockpile locations, shoulder reconstruction, or slide or debris removal," Class 10, "Repair of the highway and its facilities," Class 11, "Modification of existing features, such as slopes, ditches, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, dikes, or headwalls, within or adjacent to the right of way," Class 12, "Minor operational improvements, such as culvert replacements and median or side-ditch paving," Class 13, "Addition or replacement of devices, such as glare screens, median barriers, fencing, guardrails, safety barriers, energy attenuators, guide posts, markers, safety cables, ladders, lighting, hoists, or signs," Class 25, "Establishment, replacement, or removal of landscaping, vegetation, or irrigation systems on state or local public property, including highway and local roads rights of way and building sites," and Class 29, "Preliminary engineering tests, such as seismic, geologic, or hazardous materials testing that involve buildings or structures or require trenching or ground boring."

As a result, this undertaking is exempt from further review, no additional archaeological or built environment studies are required at this time and the Section 106 compliance process, CEQA cultural resources component, and PRC 5024 compliance are complete. This memorandum documents compliance with the agreed-upon historic preservation procedures.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **CR-1:** If buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.

- **CR-2:** In the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Gabrielle Duff, DEBC: (909) 501-5142 and Julie Scrivner, DNAC: (909) 260-8265. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

- **CR-3:** Cultural sensitivity training will be provided prior to start of construction.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Natural Environmental Study – No Effect Memorandum: November 6, 2026.

In coordination with District Biology, *No Effect* and *No Take* of federal or state-listed species or habitat are anticipated. The project area does not have suitable habitat for target plant species, burrowing owl, and/or Stephens' kangaroo rat. Additionally, the nearby National Wetland Inventory (NWI) R4SBA riverine feature will not be entered or disturbed. No permits or agreements are required or anticipated.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **BIO-MSHCP-1:** Burrowing Owl: A pre-construction presence/absence survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to disturbance. If a Burrowing owl is discovered during the pre-construction survey, a Caltrans Biologist shall be notified and a 500-foot buffer around the burrow shall be delineated.

- **BIO-MSHCP-2:** Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR): A pre-construction presence/absence survey shall be conducted within 3 days prior to disturbance. If a SKR is discovered during the pre-construction survey, a Caltrans Biologist shall be notified and an appropriate buffer around the burrow shall be delineated.

- **BIO-MSHCP-3:** Riparian/Riverine Avoidance: No storage, staging, equipment access, spoils placement, or other associated disturbance shall occur within the nearby mapped NWI R4SBA riverine/channel feature southeast of the PIA between Post Miles 9.9 to 10.1.

PERMITS AND AGREEMENTS:

According to the Natural Environmental Study – No Effect Memorandum (NES-NEM), no permits or agreements are required.

In conjunction with the results of the above technical documentation, the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measure(s) included in the Environmental Commitments Record (ECR), are expected to be implemented, as applicable. Changes to the project's scope of work, will require that the District's Division of Environmental Planning be notified in a timely manner, to determine if an Environmental Re-Evaluation will be required to confirm that the environmental documentation for NEPA/CEQA compliance, remains valid.

Updates to the original Technical Studies, or preparation of new Technical Studies may be required, and/or a new CE/CE Determination Form may need to be completed, and/or an Environmental Document may need to be prepared and approved, to document the project's compliance with all applicable NEPA/CEQA requirements.