

Notice of Exemption

2019058077

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: _____

From: (Public Agency): California Dept. of Transportation
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501

(Address)

Project Title: Three Humboldt Bridges: Bridge Seismic RetrofitProject Applicant: Caltrans

Project Location - Specific:

US Highway 101 in at Post Mile (PM) 86.8, State Route 96 in at PM 0.24 and 37.3

Project Location - City: VariousProject Location - County: Humboldt

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Caltrans proposes to conduct seismic retrofit construction on three bridges in Humboldt County: The Willow Creek Bridge on Highway 96 (PM 0.24), Camp Creek Bridge on Highway 96 (PM 37.25), and the G Street Bridge Overcrossing Highway 101 in Arcata (PM 86.77).

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of TransportationName of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Same as above

Exempt Status: (check one):

- ☐ 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 1c (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15301)
☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project does not create significant impacts to the environment. The proposed work on the existing bridges involves no expansion of existing use.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Amanda LeeArea Code/Telephone/Extension: 707-441-4571

If filed by applicant:

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: [Signature] Date: 4-26-2019 Title: Environmental Planner☒ 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.

Date Received for filing at OPR:

Office of Planning & Research
 MAY 06 2019
 STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

2019058077

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

1-HUM-101 and HUM-96	VAR	01-0A120	0113000109
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: (Briefly describe project including need, purpose, location, limits, right-of-way requirements, and activities involved in this box. Use Continuation Sheet, if necessary.)

Caltrans proposes to conduct seismic retrofit construction on three bridges in Humboldt County: The Willow Creek Bridge on Highway 96 (PM 0.24), Camp Creek Bridge on Highway 96 (PM 37.25), and the G Street Bridge Overcrossing Highway 101 in Arcata (PM 86.77). The purpose of the project is to improve the integrity of the structures and address seismic deficiencies within these three bridges. The project is needed to upgrade the existing facility to provide a reliable transportation system in a seismic event. Biological, cultural, visual, water quality, hazardous materials, floodplain and Section 4(f) reviews have been completed.

(See attached continuation sheets)

CALTRANS CEQA DETERMINATION (Check one)

☐ Not Applicable – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency ☐ Not Applicable – Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the above statements, the project is:

☐ Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class 1.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the following statements are true and exceptions do not apply:

- If this project falls within exempt class 3, 4, 5, 6 or 11, it does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law.
- There will not be a significant cumulative effect by this project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- There is not a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- This project does not damage a scenic resource within an officially designated state scenic highway.
- This project is not located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Govt. Code § 65962.5 ("Cortese List").
- This project does not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

☐ **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].)]

Jason Meyer

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Signature

Date

Dave Melendrez

Print Name: Project Manager

Signature

Date

NEPA COMPLIANCE

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117, and based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that this project:

- does not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment as defined by NEPA, and is excluded from the requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and
- has considered unusual circumstances pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(b).

CALTRANS NEPA DETERMINATION (Check one)

☒ **23 USC 326:** The State 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). As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act. The State has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Code, Section 326 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 31, 2016, executed between the FHWA and the State. The State has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

☐ 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)()

☐ 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()

☒ **Activity 5** listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and the State

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State 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 December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Jason Meyer

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Signature

Date

Dave Melendrez

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 4-24-2019 Date of ECR or equivalent: 4-24-2019

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet. Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., CE checklist, additional studies and design conditions).

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

Continued from page 1: Work would include:

Willow Creek Bridge (#04-0135)

Construction access will be made on Willow Road through Creekside Park on the southwest side of the bridge and through the water treatment plant northeast of the bridge. Temporary Construction Easements (TCE) are required for the staging areas and access points outside of Caltrans right of way. Work would include:

- Construct interior transverse shear keys
- Spot blast, clean and paint existing girders where needed
- Replace existing joint seals with new pourable joint seals.
- Install Tubular Bicycle railing on existing concrete barrier type 1 (left side only)

Camp Creek (Bridge #04-0066)

Construction staging would occur along the south side of the bridge. TCE will be required for proposed staging areas outside of Caltrans right of way. Temporary K-rail and crash cushions will be placed for lane closure. Work would include:

- Replace wooden bridge railing with new Concrete Barrier Type 80 Modified (Mod)
- Construct additional 7 inches of new overhang concrete
- Spot blast, clean and paint existing girders where needed
- Install exterior shear keys and catcher brackets at piers 2 and 3.
- Grind bridge deck by a depth of 3.5 inches, 10 feet in width and place polymer fiber concrete with #3 carbon fiber reinforced polymer (CFRP) rebars.
- Existing MBGR at approaches and departures of the Bridge will be removed and replaced with Midwest Guardrail System (MGS).
- Install Concrete Barrier Transitions at all four corners of the bridge.
- Apply architectural treatment on barrier interior face.
- Paint "CAMP CREEK BRIDGE" and "BRIDGE No. 04-0066" on northeast corner and southwest corner of the bridge.
- Install Tubular Bicycle railing on new concrete barrier Type 80 (Mod) on both sides

G Street Overcrossing (Bridge #4-0243)

Construction access and staging will occur in the median shoulder. Temporary k-rail and crash cushions will be placed at the edge of the northbound and southbound median. Work would include:

- Install Tubular Bicycle Railing on existing Concrete Barrier Type 25 (Right side only)
- At Bent 2, install new 3/8-inch steel column casing around existing column

The following measures have been included as part of the project:

Biological Resources

- Environmentally sensitive areas (ESA), including wetlands and waters adjacent to the project would be off limits to construction personnel and equipment. These areas would be indicated on construction plans as ESAs and if needed, identified with signs and/or temporary high-visibility fencing.
- Temporary construction mats would be placed over wetland areas where construction equipment would be driven on the wetlands. Construction equipment would not be stored on these mats or in wetland areas overnight but would be moved to non-wetland areas at the end of each work day.
- A contractor-supplied biologist would be on site to monitor construction activities in ESAs to ensure adherence to permit conditions and avoidance and minimization requirements for wetlands, waters, and special-status species.
- A worker education program would be developed and implemented for all construction personnel and would consist of a briefing on environmental issues relative to the proposed project. Training would be conducted by a qualified biologist.
- A Revegetation Plan would be developed and submitted with permit applications. All disturbed areas would be revegetated with native, non-invasive species or non-persistent hybrids that will serve to stabilize site conditions.
- At Willow Creek and Camp Creek, pre-construction surveys for amphibians would be conducted by a qualified biologist immediately prior to riparian vegetation removal and any soil disturbance or excavation. At Willow Creek, a qualified biologist would survey the work site and inspect all equipment and/or materials that may come in contact with FYLFs or other amphibians or their potentially suitable habitats each day before commencement of work activities.
- If any amphibians are found during pre-construction surveys, a qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, would relocate them to a safe species-specific appropriate habitat nearby, but outside of harm's way. Caltrans would obtain and possess an incidental take permit (ITP) for capturing and relocating FYLF prior to construction.
- At the Willow Creek Bridge, all excavated areas would be covered at the end of each work day to prevent inadvertently trapping amphibians or other wildlife in these pits. At the beginning of the following work day and immediately after removing any covers, the excavated areas would be inspected by a qualified biologist for trapped amphibians or other wildlife, and if any are found, they would be relocated out of harm's way. If the excavated areas fill with water and require dewatering, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent amphibians from being pulled into the pump.
- All project personnel would adhere to the latest version of the Northern Region California Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Decontamination Protocol for all field gear and equipment that will be in contact with water or amphibians. Heavy equipment and other motorized or mechanized equipment that comes in contact with water should generally follow watercraft decontamination protocols found in the AIS Decontamination Protocol.
- Vegetation would be removed outside of the bird breeding season, between September 15 and February 1). If vegetation has not been cleared outside of the breeding season (if cleared between February 1 and August 31), and construction is to begin after March 1, the following guidelines would be observed:
 - Migratory bird surveys would be conducted (no earlier than 2 weeks prior to construction) within the ESL(s) and a 300-foot buffer by a qualified biologist to identify nesting birds.

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

1-HUM-101 and HUM-96	VAR	01-0A120	0113000109
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– If active bird nests are found during pre-construction surveys: A qualified biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish the appropriate species-specific buffer. A buffer would be delineated around each active nest, and construction activities within the buffer area will not occur. A qualified biologist would monitor the active nest for disturbance during construction and nesting chronology.

- Prior to construction work, a qualified biologist with the appropriate equipment to properly survey the bridges will survey for presence of day-roosting bats within 2 weeks prior to the start of construction activities. If no bats are detected, work could proceed. If bats are detected, no construction activities would occur until after exclusion devices are installed.
- If pre-construction surveys detect presence of day-roosting bats at Arcata G Street Overcrossing, Camp Creek Bridge, or Willow Creek Bridge, the following measures will be implemented at that bridge.
 - An exit survey for bats will be conducted by a qualified contractor-supplied biologist no more than two weeks prior to installation of exclusion devices to identify the principal exit points for bats. Any suitable habitat will be sealed except one or two of the principal openings. One-way exclusionary devices will be installed on these principal openings to allow any bats remaining inside to exit from, but not return to, the roost.
 - Exclusion devices will be installed prior to the first season of construction between September 15 and February 28, when potentially occurring juvenile bats are able to fly. If it is discovered during the pre-exclusion exit survey that pups are present, installation of the exclusion will be delayed until it is determined through additional surveys that the pups are volant. The exclusion will be installed no sooner than 2 hours after sunset to allow most individuals time to exit the bridge. In addition, installation of exclusion shall be avoided during periods when the night temperatures fall below 50°F (10°C), because bats may remain inactive and not leave the roost.
 - All exclusion measures will be approved by a qualified Caltrans biologist prior to installation.
 - Installation of the bat exclusion device will be overseen by a qualified Caltrans biologist, and monitored weekly for efficacy. The exclusion device would remain in place for the duration of the project.
- Additional Best Management Practices (ABMPs) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) would be implemented. ABMPs are listed in the project Natural Environment Study (NES) (Caltrans 2018).

Cultural Resources:

- The ESA around the Camp Creek Bridge will be clearly described and illustrated in the project plans, specifications and estimates and will be discussed in the pre-construction meeting.
- Caltrans (CT) Archaeologist will consult with Tribe prior to June 1 and provide ceremonial restriction calendar to Resident Engineer by June 1.
- The Resident Engineer (RE) will notify the CT Archaeologist, who will notify the Tribe at least three weeks in advance of construction to ensure a monitor will be available for fence installation and allow for a field review of ESA limits.
- CT Archaeologist, RE and Contractor will meet with the Karuk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Tribal Representatives prior to the initiation of work. The 'Cultural Tailgate' meeting will be held on-site at Camp Creek Bridge. Tribal participants will have an opportunity to discuss matters of importance to the Tribe and community, relative to the project.
- ESA fencing and/or lathe staking will be installed by the contractor along the ESA at least 1 week prior to initiating any work. Fencing will be removed at the conclusion of construction.
- A Tribal Monitor will be on site to monitor ESA fence installation. The CT archaeologist and Tribal Representative will have the opportunity to monitor fence removal.
- CT Archaeologist will be notified when construction begins, who will notify Tribal Representative. ESA's and Ground disturbing activities will be inspected by and/or monitored by a Tribal Representative during construction.
- The RE will notify the CT Archaeologist and Tribe when construction is finished.
- Staging areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions

Water Quality

- Work below bridge decks adjacent to stream channels and wetlands will be confined to the non-rainy season (June 1 to October 15).

Hazardous Waste

- The contractor shall submit a Lead Compliance Plan, Standard Specification 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii)
- Standard Special Provision (SSP) 84-9.03C for removal of non hazardous yellow and white traffic stripe material
- SSP 14-11.14 for proper management of Treated Wood Waste
- SSP 14-11.13 for handling and disposal of removed white Lead Based Paint
- SSP 14-11.12 for handling and disposal of hazardous yellow traffic stripe
- Non Standard Special Provision (NSSP) 7-102K(6)(j)(iii) for handling, removing and disposing of earth material containing lead
- If any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) are disturbed on bridge 04-0066 for reconstruction of the bridge rails, an ACM study would be performed.

Visual Resources

- On the Camp Creek Bridge, architectural treatment would include a tribal pattern selected by the Karuk tribe recessed into the concrete of the new barrier railing.

Section 4(f)

- Public access to Creekside Park and use of the roads within the park would be maintained, except in areas of active construction.
- Construction work within Creekside Park would not occur during weekends.