

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 3
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Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.

February 13, 2020

State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
P.O. BOX 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

To Whom It May Concern:

Please see the attached NOE and CE/CE for 01-0E820 East Lake Co TMS Geotech Clearance.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Danielle Ruiz at (530) 741-5537.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Danielle Ruiz", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Danielle Ruiz
Environmental Planner

Notice of Exemption**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): Caltrans
703 B Street

Marysville, CA 95901

(Address)

Project Title: East Lake County TMS 01-0E820 Geotech Drilling

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation

Project Location - Specific:

This specific project location is on State Route 53 post mile 1.23.

Project Location - City: Clear Lake Project Location - County: Lake

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct a geotechnical design investigation for Location 2 of the East Lake County Traffic Management System (TMS) project located in Lake County on State Route (SR) 53 PM 1.23. The purpose of the investigation is to characterize the site geologic conditions (soil type and groundwater behavior) and to provide the subsurface information required for the design of a retaining wall and a Changeable Message Sign (CMS) that will be constructed at this project location.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Transportation

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation

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 6, Section 15306
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Adele Pommerenck Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-741-4215

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: Adele Pommerenck Date: 2/13/20 Title: Sr Env Planner

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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: _____

FEB 13 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

01-LAK-VAR	VAR	01-0E820	01-1500-0033
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.)

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct a geotechnical design investigation for Location 2 of the East Lake County Traffic Management System (TMS) project located in Lake County on State Route (SR) 53 PM 1.23. The purpose of the investigation is to characterize the site geologic conditions (soil type and groundwater behavior) and to provide the subsurface information required for the design of a retaining wall and a Changeable Message Sign (CMS) that will be constructed at this project location. Three borings are proposed, all will be drilled in the Caltrans Right-of-Way to depths of approximately 60 feet. The drilling will take approximately one week to complete.

(Continued on next page)

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:


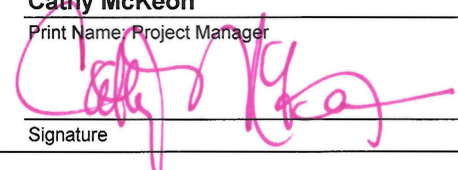
☐ Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class 6.** (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].)]

<p>Adele Pommerenck</p> <p>Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief</p> <p> 2/13/20</p> <p>Signature Date</p>	<p>Cathy McKeon</p> <p>Print Name: Project Manager</p> <p> 2.13.20</p> <p>Signature Date</p>
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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)

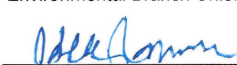
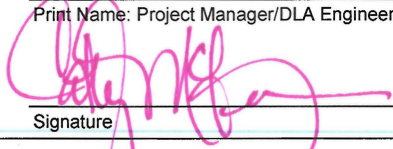
☒ **23 USC 326:** The State has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under 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)(24)**

☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()**

☐ **Activity __ 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.

<p>Adele Pommerenck</p> <p>Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief</p> <p> 2/13/20</p> <p>Signature Date</p>	<p>Cathy McKeon</p> <p>Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer</p> <p> 2.13.20</p> <p>Signature Date</p>
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Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 02/13/20 Date of ECR or equivalent: 02/13/20

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Continuation Sheet

01-LAK-VAR	VAR	01-0E820	01-1500-0033
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

Continued from page 1:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION CONTINUED:

Drilling equipment will include a conventional truck-mounted drill rig, water tender truck, drill crew cab, trailer, and geologist/engineer vehicles. The proposed subsurface investigation for the new structures will utilize a hollow stem auger and/or mud rotary self-casing wire line core system depending on the location and subsurface conditions. The drilling rig is a rotary operated, truck mounted, and hydraulic actuated unit which is both roadway compatible/compliant and off-road capable. Drilling fluids (required for rotary wash drill systems only) consist of water mixed with natural bentonite and/or biodegradable copolymer gel that will be recirculated through a closed system that includes drill pipe, casing, pumps, hoses, and a mud tank.

Sampling will include Standard Penetration Tests (SPTs) that will be taken at a minimum of 5 feet intervals throughout either drilling method (for the RW boring additional SPT samples will be collected). A standard punch core sampling barrel and/or California modified sampler will be utilized for the collection of soil samples for analytical and geotechnical analysis (i.e. corrosion, mechanical analysis and compressive strength). The samples will be removed from the site and transferred to a temporary staging area, usually a nearby Caltrans Maintenance yard (Clearlake Oaks), or the Caltrans Transportation Laboratory in Sacramento.

Borings at this site will be backfilled after the drilling and sampling has been completed. Typically, the backfill material is cement grout and/or bentonite. The backfill will be in accordance with the State Water Code, Caltrans' Borehole Sealing Standards, and Lake County Department of Environmental Health and California Well Standards Bulletin 74-81 and 74-90. All roadway boring locations will be backfilled to the ground surface and then resurfaced.

The drilling will be performed from the roadway (SR 53). All the equipment will be removed from the road at the end of the workday. Typically, the water tenders, trailers, and drill rigs are stored at the local Caltrans Maintenance yard (Clearlake Oaks), while the crew cabs and geologist/engineer's vehicles will be transported off site at the end of each workday.

Precautions during drilling will be employed to mitigate any possible equipment leaks or drilling fluid spillage. They could include plastic tarps, absorption mats and jute waddles. Also, potential leakage be monitored. If leakage is detected, the wet drilling will be stopped, and the casing will be re-drilled to a depth at which leakage has stopped (adequately sealed off). The contained drill fluids generated during drilling will be pumped into 55-gallon steel drums and transported to a Caltrans facility for processing.

RIGHT-OF-WAY

All work will be performed within Caltrans Right-of-Way

CONSULTATION/COORDINATION

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was initiated due to activities required for the placement of a 150'L x 6'W retaining wall at Location 2 SR 53 PM 1.23. Concurrence from the SHPO regarding Caltrans' No Adverse Effect without Standard Conditions finding was received on 12/26/19. Follow up consultation with the SHPO will occur regarding any findings after drilling is completed.

Tribal consultation began on January 28, 2019 by Caltrans contacting the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and requesting a consultation list of tribes, groups, and individuals who have expressed an interest in the project vicinity. Caltrans also requested the NAHC review the Sacred Lands File for any potential sacred sites within the project vicinity. The NAHC responded on February 15, 2019 indicating sacred sites were identified within the project vicinity and provided a list of Native American tribes, groups, and individuals for consultation pursuant Section 106. Caltrans then mailed Section 106 consultation letters on February 19, 2019 to the tribes, groups, and individuals identified by the NAHC.

All Geotech drilling at Location 2 SR 53 PM 1.23 would require prior Environmental notification and concurrent Tribal monitoring.

PERMITS

No permits are required.