

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: Soldier Pile Wall (03-0J700)

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located on State Route 32 in Butte County between post miles (PM) 30.8 to 31.0.

Project Location - City: Forest Ranch Project Location - County: Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct geotechnical investigation to evaluate subsurface conditions. Drilling operations will install slope inclinometer (SI) and standpipe piezometer casings, within select borings to monitor ground movement and measure groundwater levels.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Caltrans

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
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is exempt because this is to perform geotechnical investigation for data collection and resources evaluation activities for an existing highway facility which will not result in an adverse effect on the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Mike Bartlett Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 933-8071

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: 4/29/20 Title: Chief (Acting)

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

APR 29 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Revised 2011

**CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM**

<b>03-BUT-32</b> Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	<b>30.8/31.0</b> P.M./P.M.	<b>03-0J700</b> E.A/Project No.	<b>032000004</b> Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.
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**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 geotechnical investigation to evaluate subsurface conditions for an upcoming project on State Route (SR) 32 in Butte County. The scope of work will include a total of twelve borings on and along State Route 32 from approximate post miles 30.8 to 31.0. Drilling operations will be conducted in two stages and will install slope inclinometer (SI) and standpipe piezometer casings, within select borings to monitor ground movement and measure groundwater levels.

**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.

Exempt by General Rule. [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].)]

**Kelly McNally**

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

*Kelly McNally*  
Signature

*Kelly McNally*

Digitally signed  
by Kelly McNally  
Date: 2020.04.28  
11:49:45 -07'00'  
Date

**Chris Ladeas**

Print Name: Project Manager

*Christopher S Ladeas*  
Signature      4/28/2020  
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(e): activity (e)** ( )
- 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.

**N/A**

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

**N/A**

Signature      Date

**N/A**

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

**N/A**

Signature      Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: N/A

Date of ECR or equivalent : N/A

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**

<b>03-BUT-32</b>	<b>30.8/31.0</b>	<b>03-0J700</b>	<b>0320000004</b>
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:

**Stage 1:** Stage 1 drilling operation will consist of a maximum of eight borings, with up to five placed within the eastbound (EB) land and up to three placed within the westbound (WB) shoulder of SR 32.

The stage 1 drilling operation will utilize a truck-mounted or trailer-mounted drill rig equipped with a Standard Penetration Test (SPT) hammer, which will drill in a lane closure within the EB lane of Route 32. Support equipment will be parked in the lane closure or the pullouts.

**Stage 2:** Stage 2 drilling operation will consist of a maximum of four borings placed down below the east embankment of SR 32. Stage 2 drilling operation will use a remnant access road associated with previous construction operation at this site. Utilizing this access road will minimize site disturbance and will also accommodate drill-rig access. However, in order to move the drilling equipment between borings 5 and 6 and alternative access route will be needed, which will require vegetation trimming and removal.

The stage 2 drilling operation will utilize an all-terrain track drill rig equipped with a SPT hammer, which will drill below the roadway, near the toe of the embankment. Support equipment will be parked at the entrance to the access route or parked just beyond the entrance in the existing pullout. Small equipment, similar to a bobcat, will likely be used to support the all-terrain drill rig operation to clear the access route between the extant access route and the downslope drilling locations.

Both stages will require support equipment to be onsite including a water tender (water truck), a crew-cab with trailer, and two additional personnel/supply vehicles.

For drilling an auger with a maximum diameter of eight inches will be used until maximum depth, not to extend deeper than 150 feet, or practical refusal (i.e. encountering hard materials or ground water). If practical refusal is encountered the auger system will be changed to a mud rotary self-casing drilling system and drilling will continue to maximum depth. The drilling fluid will be made up of water, water mixed with bentonite clay, liquid polymer, or a mixture of both. The mud tank will be positioned on the ground surface and serves as a settlement tank for the soil cuttings, which are periodically removed and placed into 55-gallon drums for disposal. The auger cuttings will also be placed into 55-gallon drums, and all 55-gallon drums will be removed from the job site and transferred to an appropriate staging area. Upon completion of the drilling at each boring, select borings will have a plastic SI or standpipe piezometer casing placed in the borehole. The annulus of the SI/piezometer will either be grouted or filled with well sand. All boreholes that do not have a plastic SI/piezometer pipe placed will be completely sealed with grout.

Permits will not be required and all work is within the Caltrans Right-of-Way.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
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a California Way of Life.*

April 28, 2020

State Clearing House  
Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

03-BUT-032  
PM: 30.8-31.0  
EA: 03-0J700  
EFIS: 0320000004

To Whomever it May Concern:

Attached is a copy of the Categorical Exemption (CEQA) and a copy of Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the Soldier Pile Wall Project. Please return a stamped copy of the NOE in the SASE provided.

For additional information or questions concerning this environmental approval, please contact me at (530) 741-4404.

Sincerely,

*Sandeep Sandhu*

Sandeep Sandhu, Associate Environmental Planner  
North Region Office of Environmental Management, M5

Enclosures: CE and a copy of NOE