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October 20, 2026

Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State Clearinghouse

SUBJECT: Updates to the Hare Creek Stormwater Treatment Project (EA: 01-0N030/EFIS 0123000119) Notice of Exemption SCH Number 2024100082

To Whom it May Concern:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing the Hare Creek Stormwater Treatment Project, located on State Route 1 (SR 1) at postmile (PM) 59.7 adjacent to Hare Creek Bridge in the City of Fort Bragg. The proposed project would construct a stormwater treatment bioswale to address the regional stormwater treatment shortfall in District 1 and provide treatment facilities needed to address specific projects on the Mendocino Coast. During the design phase, the project has undergone a slight change in scope that now includes a down drain that would put the project under a different CEQA exemption class. Grading would need to occur that exceeds 10% slope, . therefore, the project would no longer be exempt under exemption 15304 – Minor alterations to land and is now exempt under 15301 – Existing Facilities. Attached is the new CEQA Categorical Exemption finding reflecting the updated exemption class.

In addition, the contact information changed to Desiree Davenport, Environmental Scientist at 707-682-1217

If you need additional information, please contact me at (707) 684-1217 or email desiree.davenport@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Desiree Davenport
Environmental Scientist
Caltrans North Region Environmental

On-Line Submission

Attachments:
Updated CE Form

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

Project Information

Project Name: Hare Creek Stormwater Treatment

DIST-CO-RTE: 1-MEN-1 **PM/PM:** 59.7

EA: 01-0N030 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

Project Description

The proposed project would construct a stormwater Treatment Best Management Practices (TBMP) bioswale on State Route (SR) 1 at the Hare Creek Bridge at post mile (PM) 59.7 in Mendocino County at the junction of SR 1 and SR 20. The project is being proposed to address regional stormwater treatment shortfall in District 1 and provide treatment facilities needed to address the specific projects on the Mendocino Coast.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

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** 15301. (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

Rachelle Hadley	Rachelle Hadley	10/8/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Marie Brady	Marie Brady	10/08/26
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 Enter activity number 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

N/A		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

N/A		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 10/8/2026

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:

A bioswale would be cut into the open area channeling and treating by infiltration of the stormwater runoff. Additional work includes replacing approach guardrail (MGS, Wood post), with MGS (Midwest Guardrail System, Steel Post, 2025 Std Plans A77L2). A cross culvert would be installed to direct flow from SR 1 and SR 20 to the bioswale for treatment by infiltration. Construction would last approximately 40 days over one construction season. All work would occur within Caltrans Right-of-Way. Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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

General Construction Measures

- Before any work within the project limits, including equipment staging, grading, and tree and/or vegetation removal (clear and grub), or as required by permit or consultation conditions, a Caltrans biologist or Environmental Construction Liaison (ECL) would meet with construction personnel (contractors and subcontractors) to brief them on environmental permit conditions and requirements relative to each stage of the proposed project, including, but not limited to, work windows, drilling site management, locations of ESAs, and how to identify and report regulated species within the project areas.
- Debris and materials removal during construction would be conducted as often as feasible and practicable by the contractor.

Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

- The project would comply with the Provisions of the Caltrans Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (Order 2012-0011-DWQ) as amended by subsequent orders, which became effective July 1, 2013, for projects that result in a land disturbance of one acre or more, and the Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ).

- Before any ground-disturbing activities, the contractor would prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (per the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) (projects that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre), that includes erosion control measures and construction waste containment measures to protect Waters of the State during project construction.

- The SWPPP or WPCP would identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of storm water; include construction site BMPs to control sedimentation, erosion, and potential chemical pollutants; provide for construction materials management; include non-stormwater BMPs; and include routine inspections and a monitoring and reporting plan. All construction site BMPs would follow the latest edition of the Caltrans Storm Water Quality

Handbooks: Construction Site BMPs Manual to control and reduce the impacts of construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed.

- The project SWPPP or WPCP would be continuously updated to adapt to changing site conditions during the construction phase.

- Construction may require one or more of the following temporary construction site BMPs:

    - Any spills or leaks from construction equipment (i.e., fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, and grease) would be cleaned up in accordance with applicable local, state, and/or federal regulations.

    - Accumulated stormwater, groundwater, or surface water from excavations or temporary containment facilities would be removed by dewatering.

    - Water generated from the dewatering operations would be discharged on-site for dust control and/or to an infiltration basin or disposed of off-site.

    - Temporary sediment control and soil stabilization devices would be installed.

    - Existing vegetated areas would be maintained to the maximum extent practicable.

    - Clearing, grubbing, and excavation would be limited to specific locations, as delineated on the plans, to maximize the preservation of existing vegetation.

    - Vegetation reestablishment or other stabilization measures would be implemented on disturbed soil areas, per the Erosion Control Plan.

    - Soil disturbing work would be limited during the rainy season.

- The project would incorporate pollution prevention and design measures consistent with the 2016 Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan as applicable. This Plan complies with the requirements of the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order 2012-0011-DWQ) as amended by subsequent orders. The project design may include one or more of the following:

- Vegetated surfaces would feature native plants and would be established using seed mixture, mulch, tackifier, and fertilizer recommended in the Erosion Control Plan prepared for the project.

- Where possible, stormwater would be directed in such a way as to sheet flow across vegetated slopes, thus providing filtration of any potential pollutants.

Wetlands and Other Waters

- Prior to the start of work, the contractor would be required to place high-visibility fencing (THVF) or flagging along the boundaries of all riparian or other ESAs adjacent to the project footprint where work and/or access is not proposed. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.

- Caltrans and/or the contractor (at the discretion of Caltrans) would ensure the fencing is maintained throughout the duration of the construction period. If the fencing is removed, damaged, or otherwise compromised during the construction period, construction activities would cease until the fencing is repaired or replaced.

- The project footprint would be minimized to the smallest possible extent.

Natural Communities

- Minimize Project Footprint. The project footprint would be reduced to the maximum extent feasible. The removal of established trees and vegetation would be avoided and minimized, where feasible. Where it is possible to save and preserve existing trees, care and caution would be implemented during the construction phase to minimize unnecessary removal or damage.

- Prior to the start of work, THVF or flagging along the boundaries of riparian, wetland, or other ESAs on land to avoid impacts to sensitive habitats that occur adjacent to the project footprint where work and/or access is not proposed. The extent and location of THVF or flagging would be shown on the final construction plans for the proposed project. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.

- A qualified biologist would monitor construction activities that could potentially impact sensitive biological resources. The biological monitor would be present during activities such as initial vegetation removal.

- Restoration and revegetation: After all construction materials are removed, the project area would be restored to a natural setting by grading, placing erosion control, and replanting.

- After completion, all superfluous construction materials would be completely removed from the site. The site would then be restored by regrading and stabilizing with a hydroseed mixture of native species along with fast growing sterile erosion control seed, or as required by the Erosion Control Plan.

Animal Species

- Nest Surveys: To protect migratory and nongame birds (their occupied nests and eggs), if possible, vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur between September 16 and

January 31). If vegetation removal is required during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. A buffer would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.

- To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the Corvidae family which include jays, crows, and ravens) or other predators, no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container daily and disposed of at an approved waste facility at least twice a week. Also, on-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.

Invasive Species and Pathogens

To reduce the spread of pathogens and invasive plant species both from outside sources into project locations, as well as from project locations to healthy systems in other locations, the following measures would be implemented. The Standard Measures described in NC-4 for restoring the project site post construction are also appropriate for the control of invasive species.

- To prevent the spread of invasive plant species in disturbed soil after construction, all disturbed areas would be seeded with native herbaceous species and straw, straw bales, seed, mulch, or other material used for erosion control or landscaping which would be free of noxious weed seed and propagules weed-free mulch would be applied.
- All equipment would be thoroughly inspected and cleaned of all dirt and vegetation prior to entering the job site to prevent importing invasive non-native species.
- Equipment Decontamination: • When working within potential areas of infestation or within a designated Zone of Infestation for Pitch Pine Canker (*Fusarium circinatum*), Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*), Port Orford Cedar Root Disease (*Phytophthora lateralis*), or the pathogen (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), vehicles and machinery, including wheels and tracks and hand-held equipment, must be cleaned from mud and soil and then sterilized (see additional measures in Section 4.1.2) before leaving work site.
- All tools and machinery used to prune, cut, or chip material potentially infected with one of these pathogens must be cleaned and sterilized before use on uninfected trees or in uninfected areas. Lysol™ or a 10% solution of bleach (1 part household bleach in 9 parts water) are effective sterilizers.

- Diseased Vegetation Removal: Measures proposed to minimize potential for project work to facilitate pathogen spread from the proposed project locations include:
- Any green/live material must be burned onsite or chipped to sizes smaller than 6 inches in length within five weeks of tree work. If any logs cannot be chipped, the bark must be removed.
- Woodchips and/or slash must be immediately buried, burned, or transported away from the work site and away from any other Bishop pine populations.
- When transporting, material must be tightly tarped or contained in another manner so no material, no matter the size, may escape en route.
- Material should be taken to the nearest landfill or designated disposal facility for prompt burial, chipping and composting, or burning.

Air Quality

- Comply with the Caltrans Standard Specifications in Section 14-9
- Compliance with Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, which includes idling restrictions of construction vehicles and equipment to no more than 5 minutes.
- Caltrans Standard Specification 7-1.02C "Emissions Reduction" ensures that construction activities adhere to the most recent emissions reduction regulations mandated by the California Air Resource Board.

Noise

- Control and monitor noise resulting from work activities.
- Do not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Hazardous Waste

- Utilize Standard Special Provisions (SSPs) to ensure proper handling of unregulated and regulated material within the project footprint, including:
- SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) Unregulated Earth Material Containing Lead
- SSP 14-11.08 Regulated Materials Containing Aerially Deposited Lead
- SSP 14-11.09 Minimal Disturbance of Material Containing Regulated Concentrations of Aerially Deposited Lead.
- A Lead Compliance Plan will be required as a contract item.
- SSP 14-11.14 Treated Wood Waste will be required for treated wood waste generated from guardrail removal.