

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
 PO Box 3044  
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113  
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Energy Commission  
 715 P Street  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Project Applicant:** The Northern California Land Trust, Inc.

**Project Title:** Woolsey Gardens

**Project Location – Specific:** 3120 Shattuck Ave

**Project Location – City:** Berkeley 94705      **Project Location – County:** Alameda

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The Northern California Land Trust incubates, provides, and supports permanently affordable, green-ownership housing for low-income households, transforming housing as a building block of local community autonomy and agency. Woolsey Gardens will be an 8-story urban infill, multi-family, mixed-use project in Berkeley, California. The community is designed to address the current challenges of lengthy interconnection timelines that can delay construction and renewable energy and distribute generation to the grid by developing a community that does not export power back to the grid, but also leverages the grid at times where the community's distributed generation cannot support the necessary energy needed for the community.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** California Energy Commission

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** The Northern California Land Trust, Inc.

**Exempt Status:** *(check one)*

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number  
Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15301, 15303.
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number. PRC §§ 21102, 21150; CCR., tit. 14, § 15262
- Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15061(b)(3))

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301 provides that projects which consist of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, and which involve negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination, are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. All of the components for this project will be installed at an existing commercial building site in Berkeley. Woolsey Gardens will be an 8-story multi-family, mixed-use development located within an existing structure in Berkeley. The existing structure was previously used for commercial purposes but is now vacant. The project consists of the installation of solar photovoltaics that will be mounted on the roof of the existing structure. These modifications will not result in any expansion of capacity beyond the currently existing plot. For these reasons, the proposed work will not have any significant effect on the environment and falls under section 15301.

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, sec. 15303 provides that project which consist of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure, are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. This project consists of installing roof-mounted solar and storage microgrid equipment, in-unit electric circuit breakers, and demand flexibility equipment such as electric vehicle charging stations with demand flexibility capabilities, Wi-Fi-enabled thermostats, and smart electrical panels. All such installations will be located within the existing structure (or in the case of solar photovoltaics, on the roof of such existing structure). For these reasons, the project falls within section 15303 and will not have a significant impact on the environment.

This project does not involve impacts on any particularly sensitive environment; does not involve any cumulative impacts of successive projects of the same type in the same place that might be considered significant; does not involve unusual circumstances that might have a significant effect on the environment; will not result in damage to scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway; the project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5; and the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Therefore, none of the exceptions to categorical exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 apply to this project, and this project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

For these reasons, the proposed work will not have any significant effect on the environment and falls under sections 15301 and 15303.

**Lead Agency**

**Contact Person:** Molly Mahoney **Area code/Telephone/Ext:** 916-776-0790

**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:** Molly Mahoney **Date:** 5/20/2025 **Title:** ECS I

**Signed by Public Agency**

**Signed by Applicant**

**Date received for filing at OPR:** \_\_\_\_\_