Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Rm 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Project Title: Assessing Invertebrate Prey Resources in Restoration Bayland and Estuarine Habitats in the San Francisco Bay Estuary and Sacramento Valley Regions

Project Location: San Francisco Bay (entire) and coastal areas of Humboldt County

Project Description: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) – Western Ecological Research Center pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) for scientific purposes. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to take coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*), white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*), longfin smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*) and Delta smelt (*Hypomesus transpacificus*) during the course of sampling, subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this sampling is for the USGS' research study on restoration within Baylands and estuarine habitats. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to potentially capture coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, white sturgeon, longfin smelt, and Delta smelt during surveys. The applicant will conduct year-round research sampling of nearshore and estuarine invertebrates through the use of plankton nets and minnow traps through December 31, 2027.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Susan De La Cruz, USGS – Western Ecological Research Center

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial;

☐ Declared Emergency;

☐ Emergency Project;

☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Calif. Code Regs., § 15306, Information Collection, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project involves research sampling within the San Francisco Bay and coastal areas of Humboldt County which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, white sturgeon, longfin smelt, or Delta smelt which are all listed under the California Endangered Species Act.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dylan Inskeep **Telephone:** (707) 317-3924

Signature: _____ **Date:** __**6/12/2025**_____
Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region

☐ Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____