

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

NAPA COUNTY PLANNING, BUILDING, & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
1195 THIRD STREET, SUITE 210, NAPA, CA 94559

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 0334
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

Napa County Clerk
900 Coombs St
Napa, CA 94559

PROJECT TITLE: Mount Veeder Road repair project MPM 5.2 Bank Stabilization

PROJECT PERMITS: RDS 25-19

PROJECT LOCATION - SPECIFIC: Mount Veeder Road repair (MPM 5.2 on Mt Veeder Road in Western Napa County);
38°22'42.53" north latitude and 122°25'45.25" west longitude.

PROJECT LOCATION – CITY (NEAREST): Napa

PROJECT LOCATION - COUNTY: Napa

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Repair of failed roadway, specifically reconstructing the road with a cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) concrete retaining wall extending approximately 100 feet, with wall heights between 4 and 20 feet. Relatively closely spaced piles will transfer lateral soil loads to deeper and stronger materials. Filling and repaving the roadway will be required to restore the asphalt surface and pre-slide drainage patterns. The project shall incorporate best management practices and erosion control measures, as well as environmental commitments to protect environmental resources, including any potential special-status species or cultural resources that may occur in the project area. One lane of travel will be maintained most of the time during construction whoever it will need to be closed during the construction of a tieback wall that is needed for safety.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Napa

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Frank Lucido, Napa County Public Work Department
ADDRESS: 1195 Third Street, Room 101, Napa, Ca 94559 **PHONE:** (707) 259-8377

EXEMPT STATUS (CHECK ONE):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15268(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQAG) section number:
**Section 15301 Class 1-Existing Facilities, Section 15302 Class 2-Replacement or Reconstruction, and
Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land**
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The project includes the operation and repair of existing public or private structures or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing of former use which is except under Section 15301 Class 1(a) and (c). The proposed improvements would also be considered Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15302, Class 2- Replacement or Reconstruction, which consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The slide repair would also be considered Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15304- Minor Alterations to Land, which consists of minor public alterations to the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. The project qualifies for this exemption as it will repair an existing roadway involving no expansion of the former use, the road will be located within the same footprint as originally located, will serve the same purpose and capacity, and only minor alternations to land will occur to restore the road and surrounding areas back to original conditions and will include restoration of any areas impacted by the slide with replacement vegetation. The site of the development is not in an environmentally sensitive area and is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5.

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner

PHONE: (707) 253-4437

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: _____

Title: Supervising Planner

Date: 9/02/2025

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: N/A.



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A Commitment to Service

Planning, Building & Environmental Services

1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559
www.countyofnapa.org

Brian D. Bordona
Director

To: Dewey Phan, Assistant Engineer Public Works Department	From: Prepared by Jaksen Wilson, Planner I (Planning); reviewed by - Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner (Conservation)
Date: June 9, 2025	Re: Mt. Veeder Road MPM 5.2, RDS 25-19

This memo is in response to your request for a determination of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for the proposed reconstruction of a portion of Mt. Veeder Road at mile post marker (MPM) 3.5 that sustained damage from storms occurring in Napa County in late 2024 and early 2025. Intense rainfall saturated the embankment causing a slide approximately 79 feet long and 16 feet wide and threatening the integrity of the remaining portions of the road.

Project location:

The slide area originates on Mount Veeder Road and extends downslope. The project area is located one mile north of the intersection of Lokoya Road and Mt. Veeder Road at MPM 5.2. The project area is predominantly wooded with some areas containing grasses and shrubs in and around the slide area. Adjacent parcels consist primarily of rural residences, small vineyards, and some open space within a forested landscape. The project is located in Township 6 North, Range 5 West, Section 8, which occurs on the 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Rutherford quadrangle.

Project Description:

To ensure the future stability of the road and provide for public safety, the project proposes to repair of failed roadway, specifically reconstructing the road with a cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) concrete retaining walls extending approximately 100 feet, with wall height between 4 and 20 feet. Relatively closely spaced piles will transfer lateral soil loads to deeper and stronger materials. Filling and repaving the roadway will be required to restore the asphalt surface and pre-slide drainage patterns. The project shall incorporate best management practices and erosion control measures, as well as environmental commitments to protect environmental resources, including any potential special-status species or cultural resources that may occur in the project area. One lane of travel will be maintained most of the time during construction whoever it will need to be closed during the construction of a tieback wall that is needed for safety.

CEQA:

A Biological Assessment Report was prepared for the project (Kleinfelder, April 2025), which identified two special-status wildlife species that have a moderate potential to occur within the vicinity of project area, including: Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), for which there is suitable foraging and roosting habitat within the structures and trees adjacent to the project site, and northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), which has been documented within 0.5 miles of the project site in all directions, and which suitable habitat for this species is present within 0.25 mile of the Project area. Several special-status plant species have been determined to have a low potential to occur within the project area, including bent-flowered

fiddleneck (*Amsinckia lunaris*), Napa false indigo (*Amorpha californica* var. *napensis*), Rincon Ridge manzanita (*Arctostaphylos stanfordiana* ssp. *decumbens*), Clara Hunt's milk-vetch (*Astragalus claranus*), Rincon Ridge ceanothus (*Ceanothus confuses*), narrow-anthered brodiaea (*Brodiaea leptandra*), Cobb Mountain lupine (*Lupinus sericatus*) and Jepson's leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon jepsonii*). Although potentially suitable habitat occurs in the vicinity of the Project area, the immediate roadside is unlikely to support these species due to disturbance and an abundance of non-native species. No special-status plant or wildlife species were observed during field surveys. The proposed project includes environmental commitments such as preconstruction surveys for all of the special-status wildlife and plant species, as well as visual checks for common wildlife and special-status species prior to any demolition activities, and worker environmental awareness training.

A Cultural Resources Survey Report (Kleinfelder, May 16, 2025) was prepared for the proposed project. The Report identified one potential historic resource, portions of Mount Veeder Road itself, within the project area, and recommended a Finding of No Adverse Effects to this historic property due to the project not resulting in a significant loss of historic material that would compromise the historic integrity of the potential resource or result in the removal of the road or a change in its alignment. The Report did not identify any cultural resources within the project area and identified a low potential for encountering buried archaeological deposits during implementation. The project includes the recommended measures to protect any previously unidentified archaeological deposits or human remains that may be discovered during construction. The project site is not listed on any hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5. As a result, there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed improvements would be considered Statutorily Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15269 (a) - Emergency Projects, as the repairs are necessary to maintain the existing road, the failure of which could impact public health, safety and welfare. A key consideration in the appropriateness of using this Statutory Exemption is whether an emergency was declared pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act. The Napa County Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency, citing infrastructure repairs on Mt. Veeder Road, on February 18, 2025. Pursuant to CEQA Section 15300, the proposed project would also be considered Categorically Exempt based on at least three Exemption Classes. The proposed improvements would be considered Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1- Existing Facilities, which includes the operation and repair of existing public or private structures or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing of former use. The proposed improvements would also be considered Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15302 - Replacement or Reconstruction, which consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The slide repair would also be considered Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15304- Minor Alterations to Land, which consists of minor public alterations to the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. A key consideration in the appropriateness of using these Categorical Exemptions is whether the project would be located on the same site, have substantially the same purpose and involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use. In terms of negligible expansion, the proposed project will generally take place within the existing facility's footprint and does not include significant expansions beyond existing conditions – areas impacted by the slide will be restored with hydroseed and replacement trees but not expand the road; just repair and restore the existing road access. The proposed project would restore the travel lane width and legal load capacity of the existing facility to improve public safety and would bring the facility into compliance with current Road and Street Standards. Therefore, it has been

determined that the proposed project qualifies for a 15269 - Emergency Projects Statutory Exemption, as well as a Class 1, Class 2 and Class 4 Categorical Exemption, and has no reasonable possibility of having a significant effect on the environment.

This determination is solely based on information provided by Dewey Phan, Napa County Public Works, which is attached to this memo. Should the proposed project be modified or new evidence be presented that environmental impacts have not been fully disclosed, this determination would not be valid.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jaksen Wilson at (707) 253-4269 or by e-mail at jaksen.wilson@countyofnapa.org or Dana Morrison at (707) 253-4437 or by email at dana.morrison@countyofnapa.org.

