State of California
Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

California Environmental Quality Act
Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
715 P Street, MS 1803
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: 256780_464-00-0019_HWOC_UIC

Project Applicant: Holmes Western Oil Corporation (HWOC)

Project Location: Kern County, Midway-Sunset Oil Field; 21/11N/23W/SB; Latitude 35.03144750, -119.33955660

Project Description: The proposed project consists of HWOC seeking the issuance of one project approval letter (PAL) by the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) for new Underground Injection Control (UIC) project No. 464-00-0019, located within the Midway-Sunset Oil Field. The list of injection wells that would be associated with the new UIC project are included in Attachment 1.

The proposed project would a create a new UIC project for steamflood and cyclic steam injection operations. The new UIC project would include 65 existing wells transferred from UIC project No. 464-00-393: 60 cyclic steam injection wells, two oil and gas production wells, which would be converted to temperature observation wells, and three oil and gas production wells, which would be converted to injection wells. The new UIC project would also include 17 additional existing wells, which are unassociated with UIC project No. 464-00-393: 15 oil and gas production wells, which would be converted to injection wells, one oil and gas production well, which would be converted to a temperature observation well, and one temperature observation well. No new ground disturbance is anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board reviewed the proposed project for groundwater impacts and provided a No Objection letter on April 11, 2023.

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
☐	**Statutory Exemption:**			
	☐ Ongoing Project (*pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973*)	21169	15261 (b)	
	☐ Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268	
	☐ Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)	
	☐ Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)	
☑	**Categorical Exemption:**	21084		
	☑ **Class 1**: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
	☑ **Class 2**: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
	☐ **Class 3**: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
	☑ **Class 4:** Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
	☐ **Class 7**: Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
	☐ **Class 8**: Protection of the Environment		15308	
	☐ **Class 11:** Accessory Structures		15311	
	☐ **Class 21**: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
	☐ **Class 30**: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
	☐ **Class 33**: Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333	
☐	**General Exemption** ("common sense")		15061 (b)(3)	
☐	**Not a "Project" subject to CEQA**		15378 (b)(2)	

CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR § 15300.2)**:** where project is located (e.g., sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1):
Class 1 applies because the proposed project consists of "minor alterations" of existing oil and gas production wells involving "negligible or no expansion of existing or former use" (14 CCR § 1684.1). The proposed project would make minor changes to 21 existing oil and gas production wells, 18 of which would be converted to injection wells and three of which would be converted to observation wells. Conversion of the oil and gas production wells to injection will not require any mechanical changes to the casing of the wells. Conversion of the oil and gas production wells to observation will involve negligible changes to the existing casing. The proposed project would also involve the issuance of a PAL and administratively associating 82 existing wells, including the 21 wells that would be converted, with UIC project No. 464-00-0019. The proposed project will be located within an area where existing injection activities are currently present.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board reviewed the proposed project for groundwater impacts and provided a No Objection letter on April 11, 2023. Therefore, the project would result in negligible change in existing use.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302):
Class 2 applies because the project consists of "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" (14 CCR § 15302). The proposed project would reconstruct the wellbores of three existing oil and gas production wells to convert them to observation wells. This would be a negligible change of use in the wells that would take place on existing wellbores located on existing well pads.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2):
Class 4 applies because the project consists of "minor alterations with negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation" (14 CCR § 1684.2). The proposed project would transfer existing wells from an existing UIC project to a new UIC project. This is an administrative change that will not have any physical impacts on the environment. The proposed project would convert 18 existing oil and gas production wells to injection wells; however, these conversions will not require mechanical changes to the casing. The proposed project would also convert three existing oil and gas production wells to observation wells. This work would take place on existing well pads which are large enough to accommodate the necessary equipment and can be accessed by existing roads. Well pads and roadways are maintained with a 10-foot vegetation buffer for everyday operations and fire control. No new roadways are required. No new permanent facilities will be constructed, and no expansion of associated facilities will be required. Therefore, there would be no significant ground disturbance that could impact biological resources or their habitat.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, there is no substantial evidence that there are any "unusual circumstances" associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there are no significant "cumulative impacts" resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials can be made available to the public by contacting the CalGEM CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, MS 1803, Sacramento, CA 95814; by calling (916) 445-9686; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting CEQA@conservation.ca.gov. The notice filed with the State Clearinghouse may be accessed online at: https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov

Certified: Mikayla Vaba **Date:** 9/16/2025

Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division

Attachment 1. Well List

API Number	Well Name
0403019428	NCT-1 #25
0402986505	SCU TO1
0403015016	SCU B4
0402968048	SCU C7A
0402947290	SCU D4
0402963430	SCU F11
0403015017	SCU G5
0402949048	SCU H11
0402963434	SCU C11
0403060955	SCU C2
0402963433	SCU C9
0402947453	SCU D6
0402921168	SCU D9
0402963428	SCU F7
0402963429	SCU F9
0402947288	SCU G8
0402946740	SCU H5
0403061361	SCU G9
0403061292	SCU D12
0403061291	SCU G11
0402963437	SCU K7
0403016543	NCT-1 #22
0403046372	SCU D8R
0402987260	SCU F29
0402986802	SCU F27
0402985991	SCU F23
0403061349	SCU G15
0403051082	SCU G2
0403061359	SCU G3R
0403051080	SCU D9R
0403061296	SCU D5
0403061294	SCU C3
0403058833	SCU C1
0403060952	SCU D10R

0403060957	SCU D13
0403058834	SCU D2
0403051073	SCU D25A
0403051074	SCU D26A
0403051075	SCU D27A
0403046993	SCU D29
0403046373	SCU D30
0403051081	SCU F10
0402949045	SCU F12
0403061357	SCU F14
0403002803	SCU F21R
0403051077	SCU F24
0402969538	SCU G10
0403051083	SCU G4
0403061360	SCU G6
0403061353	SCU H10
0402986803	SCU H23
0402921140	SCU H27
0403061350	SCU H3
0403061354	SCU H7
0403061352	SCU H9R
0403034058	SCU C10
0402985987	SCU C13
0403051078	SCU D1
0403061298	SCU D11
0403061297	SCU D14
0403046368	SCU D25
0403034109	SCU D26
0403046369	SCU D27
0403046370	SCU D28
0403051079	SCU D3
0403061289	SCU D7
0403058835	SCU F1
0403061295	SCU F13
0403060961	SCU F2
0403051076	SCU F22
0403061293	SCU F6
0403061358	SCU F8
0403058836	SCU G1
0403061348	SCU G14
0403061362	SCU G7
0403058837	SCU H1
0402987261	SCU H25

0403046371	SCU H29
0403061355	SCU H4
0403061356	SCU H6
0403061351	SCU H8
0402921145	SCU i24