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

EXEMPT FROM RECORDING FEE CG 27383

PROJECT TITLE: Public Works Project – Mt St. Helena Emergency Generator Replacement

PROJECT PERMITS: PW25-45

PROJECT LOCATION - SPECIFIC: The project is located at 4955 Lake County Highway, Calistoga, Ca 94515. Assessor's Parcel Number 017-010-031-000. The project is located on top of the South Peak of Mount Saint Helena and is located within an area surrounded by State Park land.

PROJECT LOCATION – CITY (NEAREST): Calistoga **PROJECT LOCATION - COUNTY:** Napa

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The County of Napa Communications Department currently has a 40-foot-tall telecommunications tower atop the South Peak of Mt. St. Helena that was built in 1970. This site is critical for the operation of public safety communication throughout the county serving local government, law enforcement, and fire agencies. The tower experiences random power outages that would leave the County without proper safety communication if not for an emergency backup generator being onsite.

In April of 2025, the emergency generator that previously provided power during outages ceased operation. To temporarily resolve this, Public Works borrowed one mobile generator from the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to operate on standby at the communications tower. The Mt. St. Helena Communications Tower Emergency Generator Project will replace the temporary generator with a permanent generator, equipped with a higher capacity fuel tank that will be suitable to power the communications tower in an emergency. The project will utilize best management practices, and all work will be done in accordance with Napa County Storm Water Program Requirements.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Napa County, PBES, 1195 Third Street, Suite 210, Napa, Ca 94559

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Estrella Munoz, Napa County Public Works Dept
ADDRESS: 1195 Third Street, Suite 110 Napa, Ca 94559 **PHONE:** (707) 299-1647

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 and Section 15302 Class 2-Replacement or Reconstruction.
☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: Pursuant to Sections 15022(a)(1)(C) and 15300.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Napa County Board of Supervisors have adopted implementation procedures, identifying specific projects

that would be categorically exempt from established CEQA Guidelines. The proposed improvements would be considered Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1-Existing Facilities, which includes the restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standard of public health and safety. The proposed improvements would also be considered Categorically 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. 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 replace the temporary generator with a new generator, located in the same place as the previously existing generator. Therefore, it has been determined that the proposed project qualifies for a Class 1 and Class 2 Categorical Exemption and has no reasonable possibility of having a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed improvements would also be in conformity with the adopted Napa County General Plan (June 2008). Improvements proposed for County owned, operated or occupied buildings and facilities are consistent with General Plan Policy AG/LU-29 which allows governmental organizations to operate and use existing structures/facilities, and to expand in size and/or volume, in order to upgrade or modernize facilities to meet public needs.

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: 10/9/2025

☒ Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: N/A

☐ Signed by Applicant

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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:	Estrella Munoz, Junior Engineer Department of Public Works	From:	Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner Conservation Division
Date:	October 1, 2025	Re:	Public Work Project: PW25-45

This memo is in response to a request for a determination of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for a replacement communication tower located at the top of the South Peak of Mount Saint Helena located in northern portion of unincorporated Napa County.

Location:
The project is located at 4955 Lake County Highway, Calistoga, Ca 94515. Assessor's Parcel Number 017-010-031-000. The project is located on top of the South Peak of Mount Saint Helena and is located within an area surrounded by State Park land.

Project:
The County of Napa Communications Department currently has a 40-foot-tall telecommunications tower atop the South Peak of Mt. St. Helena that was built in 1970. This site is critical for the operation of public safety communication throughout the county serving local government, law enforcement, and fire agencies. The tower experiences random power outages that would leave the County without proper safety communication if not for an emergency backup generator being onsite.

In April of 2025, the emergency generator that previously provided power during outages ceased operation. To temporarily resolve this, Public Works borrowed one mobile generator from the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to operate on standby at the communications tower. There is concern that the fuel capacity of the mobile generator may not meet the operational time required for emergency situations at the communications tower during a power outage. Additionally, because of the tower's remote location, access to the tower during an emergency may be significantly hampered, making refiling the temporary generator's fuel tank during an emergency challenging. If the communications tower is left without power, especially in an emergency, it has the potential to severely affect the response of emergency agencies to the public. The Mt. St. Helena Communications Tower Emergency Generator Project will replace the temporary generator with a permanent generator, equipped with a higher capacity fuel tank that will be suitable to power the communications tower in an emergency. The project will utilize best management practices, and all work will be done in accordance with Napa County Storm Water Program Requirements.

Setting:
According to the County's resource maps there are no ephemeral watercourses or mapped streams located within 500 feet of the proposed project. There is one mapped ephemeral drainage approximately 509 feet southwest of the proposed project. This drainage could provide potential habitat for aquatic sensitive species listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. However, the site is already developed with the existing tower, and any impact would be related to temporary noise during

construction but would not cause permanent intensification of use or noise on the site. The project area is located within areas mapped as northern spotted owl (NSO) habitat; however, no tree removal is proposed or would occur as part of the project. Additionally, the habitat surrounding the project site is mapped as mixed manzanita shrubland while NSO require dense, complex, old-growth coniferous forests with a high-canopy closure, large decaying trees (snags), and significant amounts of downed wood. Due to the fact that the work will occur within the existing footprints of the existing communications facility, the project is not anticipated to impact on any known environmentally sensitive area, and its impact on the environment is anticipated to be insignificant, both individually and cumulatively. Furthermore, the project will utilize best management practices, and all work will be done in accordance with Napa County Storm Water Program Requirements. There is no reasonable possibility that the projects will have a significant effect on the environment, or damage scenic resources because there will be minimal ground disturbance through the installation of replacement tower and replacement security fencing. The site is not listed on any hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5.

Pursuant to Sections 15022(a)(1)(C) and 15300.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Napa County Board of Supervisors have adopted implementation procedures, identifying specific projects that would be categorically exempt from established CEQA Guidelines. The proposed improvements would be considered Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1-Existing Facilities, which includes the restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standard of public health and safety. The proposed improvements would also be considered Categorically 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. 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 replace the temporary generator (which replaced the existing emergency generator which failed) with a new permanent generator. The new generator will be located in the same place as the former generator with the only modification being a equipped with a higher capacity fuel take to ensure the communications tower remains operational during emergencies – neither of which will result significant expansions beyond existing conditions. The proposed project would replace an existing temporary generator with a permanent generator – increasing public safety. Therefore, it has been determined that the proposed project qualifies for a Class 1 and Class 2 Categorical Exemption and has no reasonable possibility of having a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed improvements would also be in conformity with the adopted Napa County General Plan (June 2008). Improvements proposed for County owned, operated or occupied buildings and facilities are consistent with General Plan Policy AG/LU-29 which allows governmental organizations to operate and use existing structures/facilities, and to expand in size and/or volume, in order to upgrade or modernize facilities to meet public needs. This determination is solely based on information provided by Estrella Munoz of the Napa County Public Works Deptartment, 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 me by phone at (707) 253-4437 or by e-mail at dana.morrison@countyofnapa.org.