Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Caltrans District 1
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Project Title: American Dark Fiber MEN 101/MEN 20 Broadband

Project Location - Specific: MEN101 PM 30.795 & MEN 20 PM 33.226/34.101

Project Location - City: Calpella Project Location - County: Mendocino

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

American Dark Fiber, LLC (ADF), in coordination with the California Department of Technology (CDT), proposes to install broadband infrastructure consisting of fiber optic cable, conduit and vaults on State Route (SR) 101 at post mile (PM) 30.795 in Mendocino County & State Route (SR) 20 from post mile (PM) 33.226 – 34.101 in Mendocino County.

Purpose: This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project will install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System (SHS) necessary to connect to a third-party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which will bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Need: In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring high-speed broadband service to all Californians.
The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband Internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans

Exempt Status **(check one)**:

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☐ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____

☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: PRC 21080.51

Reasons why project is exempt:
This project is a linear broadband deployment in the Caltrans right-of-way or right of way of a public road that meets all conditions of Section 21080.51, and the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA. Environmental specialist reviews have occurred, and this project would not cause a significant impact to the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Cassie Nichols Phone number: 707-798-7557

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: Cassie Nichols Date: 10/15/2025 Title: Sr. Environmental Scientist

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

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