Notice of Exemption

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

From: California Department of Transportation
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Project Title: DeHaven to Rockport CAPM

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Project Location - Specific: Post Mile 78.90 to 87.82 on State Route 1

Project Location - City: Roughly DeHaven to Cottoneva Creek bridge

Project Location - County: Mendocino

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:
A Capital and Preventative Maintenance (CAPM) project to rehabilitate 16.9 lane miles of pavement, upgrade and extend guardrails, install Rail Element Wall (REW) and 22 anchor blocks, and replace sign panels.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans, District 1

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Caltrans, District 1

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: 15301(c)
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
The proposed project will rehabilitate pavement conditions of an existing roadway, replace/upgrade transition railings, signage, guardrail, and components within the roadway prism as necessary.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Devin Sutfin Phone number: 707-382-7559

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: Devin Sutfin Date: 11/07/2025 Title: Environmental Scientist - Coordinator

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: 11/07/2025

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

CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)

Project Information

Project Name: DeHaven to Rockport CAPM

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-MEN-01 **PM/PM:** 78.90/87.82

EA: 01-0J950 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

Project Description

The project is located in Mendocino County on State Route (SR) 1 from Post Mile (PM) 78.9 to 87.9. A Capital and Preventative Maintenance (CAPM) strategy will be used to rehabilitate 16.9 lane miles of Class 2 pavement, upgrade and extend guardrails, install Rail Element Walls (REW), install 22 anchor blocks, and replace sign panels. The project is needed to make cost effective repairs while the existing pavement is in generally fair condition and prevent further deterioration and structural distress resulting in a more extensive pavement rehabilitation project. Roadway smoothness is poor/fair ride quality according to International Roughness Index, existing guardrails do not meet current standards, and roadway signs are in fair condition with poor retroreflectivity. Additional details are provided on the attached continuation sheet.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class** 1: Existing Facilities. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

☒ No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.

☐ **Covered by the Common Sense Exemption**. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Rachelle Estrada	Rachelle Estrada	11/6/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Marie Brady	Marie Brady	11/06/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

☒ **23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☒ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(26)**
- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()**
- ☐ **Activity listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Rachelle Estrada	Rachelle Estrada	11/6/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Marie Brady	Marie Brady	11/06/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 11/4/2025
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 11/4/2025

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

Continuation sheet:

The project's purpose is to extend the service life of existing pavement, improve pavement smoothness, minimize maintenance, and upgrade guardrail and signs to current standards. Expected work includes cold planing asphalt concrete pavement; removing and replacing asphalt drainage dike; digouts and crack sealing; placing shoulder backing and minor concrete vegetation control; replacing pavement marking and striping, upgrading Metal Beam Guardrail System (MBGS) to MASH compliant Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) (including extending new MGS at bridges to 150' wherever applicable; install Rail Element Walls (REW); widen shoulders in specific locations of gravel pullouts to create bicycle refuge in the southbound direction; install anchor transition blocks at 7 bridges (DeHaven, Juan, Howard, Cottoneva, and Hardy creeks, and Union Landing Sidehill and Soldier Point viaducts); upgrade transition railing to Type AGT sections; and install new signs and underdrain.

Two locations, Hardy Creek and Cottoneva Creek, have been identified as potential sources of 6PPD-Q discharge into coho-bearing watersheds, due to insufficient vegetative filtration of stormwater over distances exceeding 200 feet. At Hardy Creek, the existing bridge presents a specific risk: stormwater sheet flow from both the north and south approaches is directed toward the bridge, where scuppers on the southbound lane discharge directly into the creek. A 500-foot buffer on either side of the bridge will be paved with Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA), a material that does not contain recycled tire rubber or 6PPD-Q. This buffer will eliminate the use of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt (RHMA) in areas where runoff could enter the creek through the bridge's drainage system. Cottoneva Creek bridge does not have scuppers and is situated on relatively flat terrain. Additionally, there is sufficient vegetation on both sides of the bridge to effectively filter out 6PPD-Q from stormwater runoff. To further protect the coho-bearing waters of Cottoneva Creek, a 300-foot buffer of HMA will be applied on either side of the bridge.

Environmental Commitments

Technical reviews have been completed for impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, visual resources, airborne noise, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and hazardous materials. There are minimal to no impacts anticipated to these resources. This project is located within the Coastal Zone, and a Coastal Development Permit would be obtained from the County of Mendocino. The following measures will be incorporated into the project:

- Salvage and transplant the individual maple-leaved checkerbloom found along the northwestern guardrail of Hardy Creek during fall or winter prior to construction. Prior to transplanting, the locations of the plant to be transplanted should be marked with a pin flag, during the growing season, so that the rhizomes of the plant can be located during the dormant season if the above-ground plant has died back.
- As feasible, vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur between September 16 and January 31). If vegetation removal is required during the bird breeding season, a nesting bird

survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within five days prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. The buffer(s) would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.

- No suitable Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nest trees will be removed for this project.
- To protect NSO, no construction activities generating noise levels greater than 90 dB (with the exception of backup alarms) would occur between February 1 and July 3.
- No human activities (including the use of drones) will occur within a visual line-of-site of 328 feet (100 meters) or less from any known NSO nest tree within the action area (Service 2020), or from unsurveyed suitable nesting/roosting habitat containing potential owl nest trees within 100 meters of activities proposed to occur during the majority of the owl nesting season (February 1 through July 31).
- Artificial night lighting may be required. To reduce potential disturbance to sensitive resources, lighting would be temporary and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction. Use of artificial lighting would be limited to Cal/OSHA work area lighting requirements.
- Seasonally appropriate, pre-construction floristic surveys for sensitive plant species would be completed (or updated) by a qualified biologist prior to construction in accordance with Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (CDFW 2018).
- Prior to the start of work, Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging would be installed around environmentally sensitive areas-sensitive natural communities, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare plant occurrences, intermittent streams, and wetlands and other waters, where appropriate. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.
- Caltrans biologists will salvage and transplant the individual maple-leaved checkerbloom found along the northwestern guardrail of Hardy Creek during fall or winter prior to construction. Prior to transplanting, the locations of the plant to be transplanted should be marked with a pin flag, during the growing season, so that the rhizomes of the plant can be located during the dormant season if the above-ground plant has died back.
- New Impervious Surface will total 0.42-acres, and disturbed soil area of 0.94-acres. Subsequently, Treatment Best Management Practices will be installed under the 2002 Caltrans NPDES permit. Project will not require a Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification.