County of Riverside
TLMA Aviation
4080 Lemon Street, 14th Floor, Riverside, CA 92501

FOR COUNTY CLERK USE ONLY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

November 6, 2025

Project Name: Ratification and Approval of a 5-year Cooperative Service Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, for wildlife management services at County Airports; CEQA Exempt; Districts 3, 4, and 5.

Project Location: Hemet-Ryan Airport- 4710 West Stetson Avenue, Hemet, French Valley Airport- 37600 Sky Canyon Road, Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport – 58860 Higgins Drive, Thermal; Riverside County

Description of Project: Riverside County operates the Blythe Airport, the Chiriaco-Summit Airport, the Hemet-Ryan Airport, the French Valley Airport, and the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport. These five (5) general aviation airports provide critical aviation infrastructure in support of life and safety air operations. Critical air operations based at County Airports include wildfire and firefighting support by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, law enforcement operations by the California Highway Patrol and the Riverside County Sheriff, and air medical/ambulance operations. Riverside County Airports provide critical infrastructure and connect communities with the nation's air transportation system.

In September of 2014, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a grant to Riverside County to conduct a wildlife assessment at French Valley, Hemet-Ryan and Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airports. This wildlife assessment found significant wildlife presence at each of these airports. As a result of this finding, the FAA required a wildlife hazard management plan be implemented to manage wildlife hazards at these three airports. A wildlife hazard management plan outlines the specific measures the airports will take to manage wildlife hazards. A certified airport wildlife biologist professional is required to implement wildlife management efforts and to ensure full compliance with federal and state laws for wildlife management. Airport staff can implement limited harassment and deterrence measures.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers airport services for wildlife management. They employ certified airport wildlife biologists that support airports throughout the United State. The Aviation Department has approached the USDA to solicit their full-time wildlife services for the implementation of the wildlife hazard management plan at four County Airports. The services will be retained in the form of a cooperative services agreement and work plans. The approval of the USDA Cooperative Service

Agreement is defined as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is the procurement of wildlife management services at existing facilities; no expansion of the existing facilities will occur. The operation of the facilities will continue to provide aviation services. No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Riverside

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency – Aviation Division

Exempt Status: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities Exemption; Section 15061(b)(3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption. Codified under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Article 5, Section 15061.

Reason Why Project is Exempt: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of the categorical exemption as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The project will not cause an impact to an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern, nor would the project involve unusual circumstances that could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. The project is limited to the approval of a USDA Cooperative Service Agreement. Furthermore, this project would not result in any physical direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts to the environment.

- **Section 15301 – Class 1 Existing Facilities Exemption:** This categorical exemption includes the operation, repair, maintenance, leasing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities, provided the exemption only involves negligible or no expansion of the previous site's use. The project, as proposed, will be consistent with the existing land use and would not result in a physical change to the property. These improvements fall within the criteria identified in Section 15301 (c) and (d) which allow for the repair and maintenance of existing transportation facilities and rehabilitation of structures and facilities to meet standards of health and safety. Therefore, the project is exempt as it meets the scope and intent of the Categorical Exemption identified in Section 15301, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions of the CEQA Guidelines.

- **Section 15061 (b) (3) – "Common Sense" Exemption:** In accordance with CEQA, the use of the Common Sense Exemption is based on the "general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment." State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) (3). The use of this exemption is appropriate if "it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment." *Ibid*. This determination is an issue of fact and if sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity cannot have a significant effect on the environment, then the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68. The ruling in this case stated that if a project falls within a category exempt by administrative regulation or 'it can be seen with certainty that the activity in question will not have a significant effect on the environment', no further agency evaluation is required. With certainty, there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. Approval of the USDA Cooperative Service Agreement would result in the same continued operation of the airport and will not create any new significant direct or indirect environmental impacts. Therefore, in no way, would the project as proposed have the potential

to cause a significant environmental impact and the project is exempt from further CEQA analysis.

Signed: Jose Ruiz **Date:** 11/6/2025

Jose Ruiz, TLMA Regional Office
Manager, County of Riverside
TLMA-Aviation Division

RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

AUTHORIZATION TO BILL
BY JOURNAL VOUCHER

Project Name: Ratification and Approval of a 5-year Cooperative Service Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, for wildlife management services at County Airports; CEQA Exempt; Districts 3, 4, and 5.

Accounting String: 523230-40710-1910700000 - ED19102001

DATE: November 6, 2025

AGENCY: Riverside County

THIS AUTHORIZES THE COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER TO BILL FOR FILING AND HANDLING FEES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENT(S).

NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS INCLUDED: One (1)

AUTHORIZED AND PRESENTED BY: Jose Ruiz, TLMA Regional Office Manager, TLMA-Aviation

Signature: Jose Ruiz

-TO BE FILLED IN BY COUNTY CLERK-

ACCEPTED BY: Cassandra Sandoval

DATE:

RECEIPT # (S)