NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To:
Ventura County Clerk
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009-1260

From:
Ventura Unified School District
255 W. Stanley Ave.
Ventura, CA 93001

Office of Planning and Research/Governor's
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
Online Submittal via CEQA Submit

Project Title: Foothill Technology High School Parking Lot Solar Panels("Project")

Project Location: 100 Day Road, Ventura, California 93003

Name of Public Agency Approving Project (Lead Agency): Ventura Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Ventura Unified School District

Project Description: For its Foothill Technology High School, the Ventura Unified School District has installed (3) separate solar panel structures that include (597) solar modules in the parking lot section of the campus. Each solar panel structure varied in size depending on surrounding structures and offsets as required to provide a minimum of 13'6" of clearance to accommodate fire lane requirements.

Exempt Status:

__ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
__ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
__ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
X Categorical Exemptions: CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities), CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land), CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 (Class 11 Accessory Structures) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 (Class 14 Minor Additions to Schools)
X Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code Section 21080.35

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

The Ventura Unified School District ("District") reviewed the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.).

CEQA contains a number of exemptions from CEQA including the following:

- The CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities) categorical exemption applies to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

- The CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) categorical exemption applies to the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

- The CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land) categorical exemption applies to minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

- The CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 (Class 11 Accessory Structures) categorical exemption applies to the construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to, small parking lots.

- The CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 (Class 14 Minor Additions to Schools) categorical exemption applies to minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less.

CEQA also includes a statutory exemption in Public Resources Code Section 21080.35 for the installation of a "solar energy system" (defined in Pub. Res. Code § 21080.35) on the roof of an existing building or at an existing parking lot.

The District determined that the Project is categorically exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities), Section 15303 (Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), Section 15304 (Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land), Section 15311 (Class 11 Accessory Structures) and Section 15314 (Class 14 Minor Additions to Schools) because the Project involves 1) minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or

topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, 2) the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure, 3) minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes; 4) the construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing institutional facilities, including but not limited to, small parking lots; and/or 5) minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms.

The District also determined that the Project is statutorily exempt pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.35.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 sets forth the following exceptions to categorical exemptions:

> "(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located--a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.
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> (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.
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> (c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
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> (d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.
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> (e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource."

The District reviewed the Project and determined that none of the exceptions to categorical exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.

The District reviewed the exceptions to exemption in Public Resources Code Section 21080.35(d)&(e) and determined that they do not to apply to the Project because the Project will not require:

1. An individual federal permit pursuant to section 401 or 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1341 or 1344);

2. An individual take permit for species under protection of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) or the California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5, commencing with section 2050 of Division 3, of the Fish and Game Code);

3. A streambed alteration permit pursuant to Chapter 6, commencing with section 1600 of Division 2, of the Fish and Game Code;

4. The removal of a tree required to be planted, maintained, or protected pursuant to local, state, or federal requirements, unless the tree dies and there is no requirement to replace the tree; or

5. The removal of a native tree over 25 years old.

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Antonio Castro, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Ventura Unified School District

7/8/25
Date