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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Wildcat Creek Fish Passage Geotechnical Site Investigation

DIST-CO-RTE: 10-STA-120 **PM/PM:** 15.04

EA: 10-1N350 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** 1021000170

Project Description

This project is a road improvement effort that proposes to remove the existing double 14ft diameter steel pipe culvert and replace it with a single-span bridge at Wildcat Creek to facilitate fish passage.

This memo is for drilling geotechnical borings at the proposed bridge site. The Office of Geotechnical Design-North (OGDN) is proposing carrying out a geotechnical field investigation for the proposed replacement of the Wildcat Creek Bridge (Br. No. 38-0009).

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** 6. (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

Jonathan Coley		10/21/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

John Neri		10/30/2025
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)(24)**
- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**
- ☐ **Activity Enter activity number 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

Jonathan Coley		10/21/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

John Neri		10/30/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): N/A
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: N/A

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:

General
Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the proposed work is Categorically Exempted and under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) this project is Categorically Excluded unless: 1) the scope of the project changes to include additional activities or areas, or 2) There is an unforeseen discovery of sensitive or cultural resources.

Project Description
The Office of Geotechnical Design-North (OGDN) is proposing carrying out a geotechnical field investigation for the proposed replacement of the Wildcat Creek Bridge (Br. No. 38-0009).

The subsurface investigation will include drilling geotechnical borings at the proposed bridge site in 2 locations- at the east and west abutment locations respectively. Factors such as utilities and other conflicts like, traffic, and other safety considerations may cause a borehole to be shifted by as much as 20 feet from the original planned location. The actual location will be placed as close to the existing bridge abutment location as feasible. The boreholes are proposed to be drilled to a maximum depth of 100 feet with the possibility of adjusting the depth based on field conditions, foundation materials encountered, and the foundation requirements of the new bridge. All borings will be backfilled to the ground surface with neat cement in accordance with the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Health and California Well Standards Bulletin 74-81 and 74-90.

The purpose of the proposed field work is to characterize the subsurface conditions for the proposed bridge replacement. ODGN proposes to drill and collect subsurface/rock samples for analyses and design recommendations of the foundation for the proposed replacement bridge, including Log of test Borings. Further details about the geotechnical work can be found in the Site Investigation Plan.

The proposed Geotechnical investigation activities will not have any impacts on, Noise, Water Quality, Visual, Cultural, Hazardous Waste, or Stormwater resources.

Biology
If drilling occurs between February 1 and September 30 of any season, a biologist will need to do a pre-activity survey for ground-nesting birds. The risk level of postponing drilling due to migratory bird issues is very low.

Air
Per the Air Quality Geotech Memo:

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-9.02, “Air Pollution Control,” and Section 10-5, “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, regulations, and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code Section 11017.