CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 11/2020)

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): DDO Euclid Street On-Ramp Soundwall Repair

DIST-CO-RTE: 12-ORA- VAR **PM/PM:** Various

EA: 0V8904/1225000100 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** NA

Project Description

See next page.

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 (d). (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

SMITA DESHPANDE	Smita Deshpande	July 7, 2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Farid Nowshiravan	Farid Nowshiravan	July 7, 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, 2019, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)()**
- ☐ **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 December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

NA		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

NA		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: NA
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 7/9/2025

Continuation sheet:

This District Director's Order will temporarily remove and replace Nine (9) failing laminated sign panels on Routes 5, 22, 55, 91, and 241. These panels have been identified by HQ with inappropriate adhesive used that will de-bond and delaminate. Two (2) sign locations are on sign structures and the remainder seven (7) locations are roadway signs on a two-wood post along the shoulder areas. The nine sign locations are detailed in Table 1 below and all are within the state Right-of-way:

Table 1. Sign Locations

Sign No.	Sign Description	Overhead/Roadside	Route	Post Miles
1	Stanton Westminster	Roadside	22	R3.388
2	Irvine 3 San Diego 87	Roadside	5	29.79
3	Corona 15 Riverside 30	Roadside	91	R10.614
4	Discovery Science Ctr Bowers/Kidseum Museum Next Exit	Roadside	5	34.4
5	Senior Master Sergeant John James Paoletti Memorial Highway	Roadside	5	10.24
6	Senior Master Sergeant John James Paoletti Memorial Highway	Roadside	5	10.58
7	Santiago Cyn College Next Exit	Roadside	241	33.346
8	Fourth St Irvine Blvd EXIT ONLY	Overhead	55	11.211
9	Seventeenth Street 3/4 mile Exit 12	Overhead	55	10.785

The Total Disturbed Soil Area is less than 1 acre. All equipment staging will be done offsite. This work will be completed at night. The project will not disturb any existing guardrails. With the exception of Location 1, roadside signposts will remain, and we will only replace the sign panels. The sign panels will be fabricated offsite. There will be no trees, shrub and vegetation removal on this project. All work will occur within the state ROW and no acquisitions or Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) are required at this time. This Project is state funded only and subject to CEQA.

The limits of the proposed project are within the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB). This project must conform to all applicable water quality regulations and/or permit requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and any applicable local Regional Water Quality Control Board(s) (RWQCB), including, but not limited to, the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ. NPDES No. CAS000003), the Statewide General NPDES Permit for Construction Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ. NPDES No. CAS000002), and the Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan, and any subsequent revisions and/or additional requirements at the time of construction.

Since the project is under Director's Orders Force Account, the contractor will be subject to the 2024 Caltrans Standard Specifications including *Section 13 Water Pollution Control.* The project's Construction/Resident Engineer will ensure that the

temporary BMPs for the project are properly installed during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality.

No significant environmental consequences are anticipated with the proposed project. In addition to the measures related to construction noise, air pollution control, water pollution control, erosion, cultural resources, and any subsequent requirements as given in the Caltrans Standard Specifications, the following conditions are required: *None*.

Supporting Technical Studies/Memo

- Water Quality Technical Memo (CT DEA, Salas/Cuevas, 7/8/2025)
- Natural Environmental Study (No Effect) (CT DEA, Lisa Sato, 6/24/2025)
- Cultural Screening Memo (CT DEA, Victoria Stosel, 6/25/2025)
- Environmental Engineering Email (CT DEA, Behtash/Caraig, 7/1/2025)

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Memorandum

Making Conservation
a California Way of Life

To: **JUDY BERNAL**
DISTRICT 12
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Date: July 8, 2025

File: 12-0V890_
1225000100
12-ORA-Var
PM Var

From: **HECTOR SALAS**
WATER QUALITY SPECIALIST
NPDES/ STORM WATER UNIT
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS / DISTRICT 12

Subject: **WATER QUALITY/ NPDES MEASURES FOR DIRECTOR'S ORDERS TO REPLACE SIGN PANNELS AT VARIOUS ROUTES**

Under Emergency Director's Orders this project will remove and replace nine failing laminated sign panels on I-5, SR 22, SR 91 and SR 241.

The limits of the proposed project are within the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB). This project must conform to all applicable water quality regulations and/or permit requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and any applicable local Regional Water Quality Control Board(s) (RWQCB), including, but not limited to, the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ. NPDES No. CAS000003), the Statewide General NPDES Permit for Construction Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ. NPDES No. CAS000002), and the Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan, and any subsequent revisions and/or additional requirements at the time of construction.

Since the project is under Director's Orders Force Account, the contractor will be subject to the 2024 Caltrans Standard Specifications including *Section 13 Water Pollution Control.* The project's Construction/Resident Engineer will ensure that the temporary BMPs for the project are properly installed during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality.

Measures to protect water quality during construction should include the following:

1.) The Contractor is subject to Caltrans 2024 Standard Specifications including *Section 13 Water Pollution Control.*

2.) **Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs**) for protecting water quality during construction shall follow the latest version of the *Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks- Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual.*

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California Department of Transportation – District 12

Natural Environmental Study – No Effect

Technical Memorandum

As directed by HQ DEA, when an NES or NES MI is <u>not</u> prepared, this No Effect Technical Memorandum is used to document project review at Caltrans District 12. Use only for projects in urban areas where biological impacts are characterized either as: a) no biological impacts or b) the biological impacts are extremely minor and ALL project effect(s) can be avoided with incorporated and/or proposed project avoidance measures (ex., construction calendar constraints).

1 EA/E-FIS# or Federal Project # (FPN): 0V890; 1225000100

2 Project Title: Director's Order Laminated Sign Panel Replacement Project

3 Location: This Project is on various routes: 5, 22, 55, 91, and 241, in various cities, and Huntington Beach, in the county of Orange, Various Post Miles (see list below).

4 Project Description: This District Director's Order will temporarily remove and replace Nine (9) failing laminated sign panels on Routes 5, 22, 55, 91, and 241. These panels have been identified by HQ with inappropriate adhesive used that will de-bond and delaminate. Two (2) sign locations are on sign structures and the remainder seven (7) locations are roadway signs on a two-wood post along the shoulder areas. All equipment staging will be done offsite. This work will be completed at night. The project will not disturb any existing guardrails. With the exception of Location 1, roadside signposts will remain, and we will only replace the sign panels. The sign panels will be fabricated offsite. There will be no trees, shrub and vegetation removal on this project.

- Location 1: SR-22; PM 3.33 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace this sign. Only the left shoulder area will be closed on EB Route 22 offramp. This location is missing two wooden signposts, so we will replace these signposts. This will cause total dirt disturbance of 2 feet by 2 feet by 6 feet deep.
- Location 2: I-5; PM 29.79 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on SB Interstate Route 5.
- Location 3: SR-91; PM 10.9 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on EB Route 91.
- Location 4: I-5; PM 34.4 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on SB Interstate Route 5.

- Location 5: I-5; PM 10.2 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on NB Interstate Route 5.
- Location 6: I-5, PM 10.6 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on SB Interstate Route 5.
- Location 7: SR-241, PM 31.7 - Hand tools equipment will be used to replace the sign. Only the right shoulder area will be closed on NB Route 241.
- Location 10: SR-55, PM 11.21 - A crane and manlift equipment will be used to replace the sign. We will close lane #6 and right shoulder areas on SB Route 55.
- Location 11: SR-55, PM 10.85 - A crane and man lift equipment will be used to replace the sign. We will close lane #2, 3, 4 and the right shoulder areas on NB Route 55. The bridge is included in our maximum disturbance area only because there will be lane closure cones on the pavement below. There will be no work done to or on the bridge structure.

5 Project Setting: The project has 9 different locations on various routes, in the cities of Santa Ana, Irvine, Tustin, Laguna Beach, and Huntington Beach. The project site consists of developed roadway. The surrounding landscape for 8 locations consists mostly of commercial and residential development, and transportation corridors. One exception is location 7 along SR-241, which is surrounded by undeveloped habitat. Vegetation mostly consists of ornamental trees and highway ornamental vegetation at 8 locations. Location 7 has coastal sage scrub habitat. No impacts to any jurisdictional waters, vegetation or any other biological resources are anticipated. All work will occur within Caltrans right of way at night.

6 Methods Used: The District Director's Order package was reviewed for initial project information, which included Project Plans and the Environmental Study Request form. An aerial survey was performed using Google Earth.

7 Resources Evaluated: A query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPaC), and The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) California Species List was performed for the project location. In addition, the USFWS Critical Habitat mapper was reviewed for two of the Project locations.

8 Avoidance Measures:

No Effects to Biological Resources/No avoidance measures ☒

Avoidance Measures Required (see list below) ☐

9 Effect Findings (Federally listed species/Critical Habitat/Federal or State Permits):

No Effect ☒ No Permits Required ☒

FESA Effect Statement: No effect. All of the work will occur within state ROW. Project work may increase ambient noise levels during the nighttime work. No critical habitat is within or near the proposed project site. Therefore, there will be no effect to designated critical habitat. All of the species on the CNDDB, IPaC, and NMFS lists have a very low potential of occurring within the project areas; hence a No Effect determination has been made for this project.

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10 Preparer: Lisa Sato

☒ Preparer is a Caltrans AEP (NS), or SEP (or above) with Natural Science experience (to demonstrate required professional qualifications).

Caltrans Senior Environmental Planner Approval:

Date: 6/24/25

IPaC U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

IPaC resource list

This report is an automatically generated list of species and other resources such as critical habitat (collectively referred to as *trust resources*) under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) jurisdiction that are known or expected to be on or near the project area referenced below. The list may also include trust resources that occur outside of the project area, but that could potentially be directly or indirectly affected by activities in the project area. However, determining the likelihood and extent of effects a project may have on trust resources typically requires gathering additional site-specific (e.g., vegetation/species surveys) and project-specific (e.g., magnitude and timing of proposed activities) information.

Below is a summary of the project information you provided and contact information for the USFWS office(s) with jurisdiction in the defined project area. Please read the introduction to each section that follows (Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, USFWS Facilities, and NWI Wetlands) for additional information applicable to the trust resources addressed in that section.

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Location

Orange County, California

Local office

Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office

(760) 431-9440
(760) 431-5901

2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250

Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Endangered species

This resource list is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an analysis of project level impacts.

The primary information used to generate this list is the known or expected range of each species. Additional areas of influence (AOI) for species are also considered. An AOI includes areas outside of the species range if the species could be indirectly affected by activities in that area (e.g., placing a dam upstream of a fish population even if that fish does not occur at the dam site, may indirectly impact the species by reducing or eliminating water flow downstream). Because species can move, and site conditions can change, the species on this list are not guaranteed to be found on or near the project area. To fully determine any potential effects to species, additional site-specific and project-specific information is often required.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act **requires** Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of such proposed action" for any project that is conducted, permitted, funded, or licensed by any Federal agency. A letter from the local office and a species list which fulfills this requirement can **only** be obtained by requesting an official species list from either the Regulatory Review section in IPaC (see directions below) or from the local field office directly.

For project evaluations that require USFWS concurrence/review, please return to the IPaC website and request an official species list by doing the following:

1. Draw the project location and click CONTINUE.
2. Click DEFINE PROJECT.
3. Log in (if directed to do so).
4. Provide a name and description for your project.
5. Click REQUEST SPECIES LIST.

Listed species[1] and their critical habitats are managed by the Ecological Services Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the fisheries division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries[2]).

Species and critical habitats under the sole responsibility of NOAA Fisheries are **not** shown on this list. Please contact NOAA Fisheries for species under their jurisdiction.

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1. Species listed under the Endangered Species Act are threatened or endangered; IPaC also shows species that are candidates, or proposed, for listing. See the listing status page for more information. IPaC only shows species that are regulated by USFWS (see FAQ).
2. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

The following species are potentially affected by activities in this location:

Birds

NAME	STATUS
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Polioptila californica californica Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8178	Threatened
Least Bell's Vireo Vireo bellii pusillus Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered

Reptiles

NAME	STATUS
Southwestern Pond Turtle Actinemys pallida Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4768	Proposed Threatened

Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
Arroyo (=arroyo Southwestern) Toad Anaxyrus californicus Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3762	Endangered
Western Spadefoot Spea hammondii No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	Proposed Threatened

Insects

NAME	STATUS

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Monarch Butterfly Danaus plexippus Wherever found There is **proposed** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Proposed Threatened
Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Euphydryas editha quino (=E. e. wrighti) Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5900	Endangered

Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
San Diego Fairy Shrimp Branchinecta sandiegonensis Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6945	Endangered

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
Braunton's Milk-vetch Astragalus brauntonii Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5674	Endangered
Nevin's Barberry Berberis nevinii Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8025	Endangered
Santa Monica Mountains Dudleyea Dudleya cymosa ssp. ovatifolia Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2538	Threatened

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Critical habitats

Potential effects to critical habitat(s) in this location must be analyzed along with the endangered species themselves.

There are no critical habitats at this location.

You are still required to determine if your project(s) may have effects on all above listed species.

Bald & Golden Eagles

Bald and Golden Eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act [2] and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) [1]. Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to Bald or Golden Eagles, or their habitats, should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, as described in the various links on this page.

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds
- Nationwide avoidance and minimization measures for birds https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action

There are Bald Eagles and/or Golden Eagles in your project area.

Measures for Proactively Minimizing Eagle Impacts
For information on how to best avoid and minimize disturbance to nesting bald eagles, please review the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines. You may employ the timing and activity-specific distance recommendations in this document when designing your project/activity to avoid and minimize eagle impacts. For bald eagle information specific to Alaska, please refer to Bald Eagle Nesting and Sensitivity to Human Activity.

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

The FWS does not currently have guidelines for avoiding and minimizing disturbance to nesting Golden Eagles. For site-specific recommendations regarding nesting Golden Eagles, please consult with the appropriate Regional Migratory Bird Office or Ecological Services Field Office.

If disturbance or take of eagles cannot be avoided, an incidental take permit may be available to authorize any take that results from, but is not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful activity. For assistance making this determination for Bald Eagles, visit the Do I Need A Permit Tool. For assistance making this determination for golden eagles, please consult with the appropriate Regional Migratory Bird Office or Ecological Services Field Office.

Ensure Your Eagle List is Accurate and Complete

If your project area is in a poorly surveyed area in IPaC, your list may not be complete and you may need to rely on other resources to determine what species may be present (e.g. your local FWS field office, state surveys, your own surveys). Please review the Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles, to help you properly interpret the report for your specified location, including determining if there is sufficient data to ensure your list is accurate.

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to bald or golden eagles on your list, see the "Probability of Presence Summary" below to see when these bald or golden eagles are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

Review the FAQs

The FAQs below provide important additional information and resources.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle Haliaeetus leucocephalus This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31
Golden Eagle Aquila chrysaetos This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31

NOT FOR CONSULTATION

Probability of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "Supplemental

Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)