

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: ☒ Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Saugus Union School District

24930 Avenue Stanford

Santa Clarita, CA 91355

☒ County Clerk - Recorder
County of Los Angeles

12400 Imperial Hwy

Norwalk, CA 90650

Bouquet Canyon Early Learning Academy Modernization Project

Project Title

28110 Wellston Drive

Project Location - Specific

Santa Clarita

Project Location – City

Los Angeles

Project Location – County

The proposed project would include the modernization of the Bouquet Canyon ELA campus (Bouquet Canyon ELA or campus) with the implementation of four proposed project components: (1) addition of new restrooms within the existing multipurpose building; (2) new shade structure for Early Start Play Equipment; (3) new lunch shelter and playground area fencing; and (4) replacement of the asphalt on the lower playground and fire lane. Student and staff capacity at Bouquet Canyon ELA would not be impacted.

New Restrooms

The proposed project would construct new student and staff restrooms within the existing multipurpose building located at the center of the Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. The proposed project would add one girls' restroom, one boys' restroom, and two staff restrooms on the west side of the building. All new restrooms would be designed to meet ADA accessibility standards. Additionally, the project would include installation of a new utility room and new drinking fountains.

Campus Improvements

In addition, the proposed project would include the installation of a new shade structure above the Early Start Play Equipment located at the southeast corner of the campus; new fencing would be installed around the existing lunch shelter, playground area, and swings located at the center of the campus; and the asphalt at the lower playground and fire lane at the northern portion of the campus would be replaced.

Construction of the proposed project would be completed in two phases. The new restrooms would be completed between December 2025 and March 2026 and the campus improvements would be completed between June 2026 and August 2026.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Saugus Union School District

Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Saugus Union School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

☐ 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: Class 1, CCR § 15301, Existing Facilities; Class 3, CCR § 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 14, CCR § 15314, Minor Additions to Schools☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

The proposed new restrooms, utility room, and water fountains in the existing multipurpose building are exempt from CEQA under Class 1, *Existing Facilities* (Section 15301), because the project involves minor interior alteration of an existing public facility that would not require expansion of the existing use. The proposed project would alter the existing multipurpose building with the addition of new restrooms for the use of the current students and staff at Bouquet Canyon ELA. Additionally, the proposed project would include replacement of the asphalt at the lower playground and fire lane at the northern portion of the campus. All proposed improvements would occur within the boundaries of the fully developed and operational Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the expansion of existing campus or change the use of the project site. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301.

The proposed new fencing is exempt from CEQA under Class 3, *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures* (Section 15303), because the proposed project involved the addition of new fencing around the exterior of the existing lunch shelter, playground, area, and swings. The proposed project would serve the existing student population at Bouquet Canyon ELA and would not alter or expand the existing school use or increase student capacity, and would only result in minor improvements to the existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

The proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Class 14, *Minor Additions to Schools* (Section 15314), because the proposed project would occur with the existing school grounds and would not result in the construction of any new classrooms. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase student capacity on the campus by 25 percent or 10 new classrooms, consistent with the exemption. The proposed project would include additions to the existing multipurpose building, play equipment, lunch area, and playground/fire lane would take place entirely within the developed Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. The proposed project would not alter or expand the existing school use, increase student capacity or the number of classrooms, and would only result in minor improvements to the existing campus. No off-campus improvements would occur. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply.

Reasons why project is exempt

Kathie Pisano, Facilities Project Manager

(661) 294-5300

Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption findings

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project ☒ Yes ☐ No

Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature: _____

Title: Nick Heinlein, Asst. Supt. of Business

November 2025

**BOUQUET CANYON EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY
MODERNIZATION PROJECT
CEQA EXEMPTION MEMORANDUM**
for the Saugus Union School District

Prepared for:

Saugus Union School District

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

The Saugus Union School District (SUSD or District) proposes to modernize the Bouquet Canyon Early Learning Academy campus (Bouquet Canyon ELA or campus) with the construction of new restrooms within the existing multi-purpose building, the addition of a new shade structure and fencing, and asphalt replacement at lower playground and fire lane on the campus (proposed project). This memorandum evaluates the appropriateness of a Categorical Exemption for the proposed project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301, *Existing Facilities*, Section 15303, *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*, and Section 15314, *Minor Additions to Schools*. The District is the lead agency for the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA Statute and Guidelines.

1.2 Statutory Authority and Requirements

Once it is determined that an activity is a project subject to CEQA, it is then determined whether the project is exempt from CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b) outlines the ways in which a project may be exempt as follows:

A project is exempt from CEQA if:

- 1) The project is exempt by statute (see, e.g., Article 18, commencing with Section 15260).
- 2) The project is exempt pursuant to a categorical exemption (see Article 19, commencing with Section 15300) and the application of that categorical exemption is not barred by one of the exceptions set forth in Section 15300.2.
- 3) The activity is covered by the common-sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.
- 4) The project will be rejected or disapproved by a public agency. (See Section 15270(b)).
- 5) The project is exempt pursuant to the provisions of Article 12.5 of Chapter 3.

Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, of the CEQA Guidelines includes a list of classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and are, as a result, exempt from review under CEQA, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(2). As further discussed in Section 4, Findings Concerning CEQA Exemption, the proposed project is exempt as Class 1, 3, and 14 categorical exemptions, as defined in Section 15301, Existing Facilities; Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; and Section 15314, Minor Additions to Schools of the CEQA Guidelines, and is not barred by any of the exceptions in Section 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.1 Project Location

The Bouquet Canyon ELA campus is at 28110 Wellston Drive (Assessor's Parcel Number 3244-035-902) in the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County (project site) (see Figure 1, *Project Location*). The campus is bounded by residential uses to the south and east, Bouquet Canyon Park to the west, and undeveloped land to the north (see Figure 2, *Aerial Photograph*). Vehicular access to the campus is provided via Wellston Drive. Regional access to the campus is provided by Interstate (I-) 5, approximately 5 miles southwest of the campus, and State Route (SR-) 14, approximately 4.5 miles southeast of the campus.

2.2 General Plan Land Use and Zoning

The Bouquet Canyon ELA campus has General Plan land use and zoning designation of Public Institutional (PI). The campus is surrounded by Urban Residential (5 dwelling units per acre [du/a]) (UR2) zones to the east, and south, and southwest. West of the project site is zoned Open Space (OS). North of the project site is also zoned PI. Land use designations surrounding the site are consistent with zoning designations (City of Santa Clarita 2023).

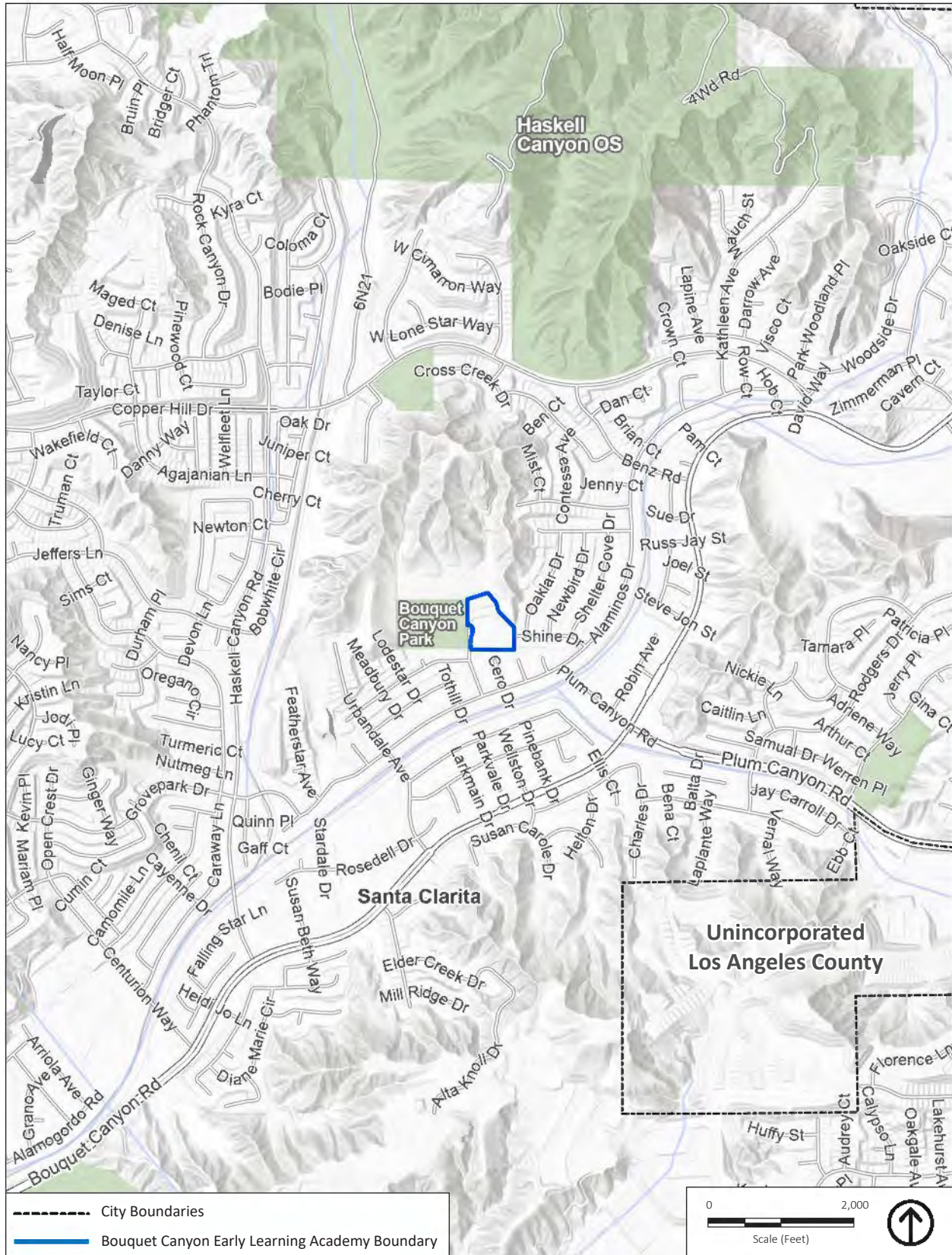
2.3 Bouquet Canyon Early Learning Academy

Bouquet Canyon ELA opened in 2024 and operates as a preschool for students of ages three and four (SUSD 2025).

2.4 Saugus Union School District

The Saugus Union School District (District) provides school services to the City of Santa Clarita and includes 14 elementary schools and 1 preschool. SUSD had a districtwide enrollment of 9,191 students in the 2024-2025 school year (CDE 2025).

BOUQUET CANYON ELA MODERNIZATION PROJECT
SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Generated using GIS Pro 2025.

Figure 1
Project Location

BOUQUET CANYON ELA MODERNIZATION PROJECT
SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Nearmap 2025.

Figure 2
Aerial View

3. PROPOSED PROJECT

3.1 Proposed Project

The proposed project would include the modernization of the Bouquet Canyon ELA campus with the implementation of four proposed project components: (1) addition of new restrooms within the existing multipurpose building; (2) new shade structure for Early Start Play Equipment; (3) new lunch shelter and playground area fencing; and (4) replacement of the asphalt on the lower playground and fire lane. Student and staff capacity at Bouquet Canyon ELA would not be impacted.

NEW RESTROOMS

The proposed project would construct new student and staff restrooms within the existing multipurpose building located at the center of the Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. The proposed project would add one girls' restroom, one boys' restroom, and two staff restrooms on the west side of the building. All new restrooms would be designed to meet ADA accessibility standards. Additionally, the project would include installation of a new utility room and new drinking fountains. The multipurpose room restroom improvements are shown in Figure 3, *Proposed Site Plans*.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

In addition, the proposed project would include the installation of a new shade structure above the Early Start Play Equipment located at the southeast corner of the campus; new fencing would be installed around the existing lunch shelter, playground, area, and swings located at the center of the campus; and the asphalt at the lower playground and fire lane at the northern portion of the campus would be replaced (see Figure 3, *Proposed Site Plans*).

3.2 Project Construction

Construction of the proposed project would be completed in two phases. The new restrooms would be completed between December 2025 and March 2026 and the campus improvements would be completed between June 2026 and August 2026. All construction equipment and workers would be located within the boundaries of the project site and contractors would adhere to Section 11.44.080, Special Noise Sources: Construction and Building, of the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code, to avoid disruption to campus operations. The proposed project would not increase the net total number of classrooms on the campus and would not increase the school's student capacity. All project improvements would occur on campus, and no off-site improvements would be included as part of the proposed project.

Source: sgh Architects 2025.

4. FINDINGS CONCERNING CEQA EXEMPTION

The proposed project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Classes 1, 3, and 14 exemptions.

4.1 Categorical Exemption

CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15301

Class 1, Existing Facilities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301), consists of 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 key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use.

The proposed new restrooms, utility room, and water fountains in the existing multipurpose building are exempt from CEQA under Class 1, *Existing Facilities* (Section 15301), because the project involves minor interior alteration of an existing public facility that would not require expansion of the existing use. The proposed project would alter the existing multipurpose building with the addition of new restrooms for the use of students and staff at Bouquet Canyon ELA. Additionally, the proposed project would include replacement of the asphalt at the lower playground and fire lane at the northern portion of the campus. All proposed improvements would occur within the boundaries of the fully developed and operational Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the expansion of existing campus or change the use of the project site. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301.

CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15303

Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15303), consists of 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 numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to: (accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

The proposed new fencing is exempt from CEQA under Class 3, *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures* (Section 15303), because the proposed project involves the addition of new

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fencing around the exterior of the existing lunch shelter, playground, area, and swings. The proposed project would serve the existing student population at Bouquet Canyon ELA and would not alter or expand the existing school use or increase student capacity, and would only result in minor improvements to the existing campus. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

CEQA GUIDELINE SECTION 15314

Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines Section 15314), consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25 percent or 10 classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

The proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Class 14, *Minor Additions to Schools* (Section 15314), because the proposed project would occur with the existing school grounds and would not result in the construction of any new classrooms. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase student capacity on the campus by 25 percent or 10 new classrooms, consistent with the exemption. The proposed project would include additions to the existing multipurpose building, play equipment, lunch area, and playground/fire lane, which would take place entirely within the developed Bouquet Canyon ELA campus. The proposed project would not alter or expand the existing school use or increase student capacity or the number of classrooms, and would only result in minor improvements to the existing campus. No off-campus improvements would occur. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

4.2 Review of Exceptions to the Categorical Exemption

The proposed project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would 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 have an 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.

The project site is located on the existing Bouquet Canyon ELA campus that includes classroom buildings, athletic fields and facilities, parking lots, concrete walkways, and ornamental landscaping. Due to the school's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The project site is located in

CEQA EXEMPTION MEMORANDUM

an urbanized and developed area of the City. No mapped riparian habitats or wetlands exist on or near the project site (USFWS 2025). Additionally, there is no evidence of hazardous materials or substances on the campus (see Section (e), *Hazardous Waste Sites*). As such, the project site is not considered to be a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

(b) Cumulative Impacts. 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.

There are no other planned projects proposed on the campus at this time that, in combination with the proposed project, would result in cumulative impacts. Any future campus improvements would be implemented as independent projects, confined to their respective sites, and subject to their own environmental review under CEQA, as applicable. Construction of the proposed project would be scheduled and phased to minimize disruption to on-campus activities and the surrounding community. Additionally, because the proposed project consists of minor additions and alteration of existing facilities, the proposed project would not expand campus boundaries, increase student or staff capacity, or introduce new operational activities. The proposed project would not contribute to cumulative environmental effects. Significant cumulative impacts are not anticipated to occur with the implementation of any other projects. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

(c) Significant Effects. 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.

The project site is on a currently occupied school campus that is entirely developed, disturbed, and used throughout the year. The proposed project, which involves the addition of new restrooms, shade structure, fencing, and asphalt, would add new development consistent with the existing uses on the project site. There are no sensitive resources within or adjacent to the project site. There is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Proposed improvements would not change access and circulation of the surrounding area. All construction activities would comply with current local, State, and federal laws, regulations, construction best management practices, and District standards and guidelines. Therefore, this exemption does not apply to the proposed project.

(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.

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There are no designated State scenic highways near the campus. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest eligible State scenic highway is Interstate 5 (I-5) from Post Mile (PM) R44.014 to PM R55.292, approximately 5 miles southwest of the project site. The closest officially designated scenic highway is State Route 2 (SR-2) from PM 27.205 to PM 82.265, approximately 22 miles southeast of the project site (Caltrans 2025). All proposed improvements would occur within the boundaries of the existing Bouquet Canyon ELA campus and are not visible from any eligible or designated scenic highways due to distance; thus, the proposed project would not affect any scenic highways. Additionally, due to the distance between the project site and these highways, the proposed project would not 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. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Five environmental databases were searched for hazardous materials sites on the site:

- EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2025a)
- GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2025)
- EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2025)
- Solid Waste Information System. California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle 2025)
- Department of Toxic Substance Control Cortese List (DTSC 2025b)

The search of these databases did not identify any active hazardous waste sites within 0.25 miles of the project site. The project is confined to the campus, and the site is not identified on the DTSC Cortese List as a hazardous site. Thus, the project site is not identified as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and the project would not create a hazard to the public. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

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(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code Section 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be a historical resource.

The Bouquet Canyon ELA campus began operation in 2024 and is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or listed as a California Historical Landmark or California Point of Historical Interest, nor is there a listed historic resource within a 0.25-mile radius of the project site (NPS 2025; OHP 2025a, 2025b). Additionally, neither the school nor any adjoining property is listed as a historic resource or potential historic resource by the City of Santa Clarita. No historical resources have been identified on-site during preparation of this Notice of Exemption. Therefore, the historical sites exception does not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at Bouquet Canyon ELA Preschool is exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15303, and 15314. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project does not meet the conditions specified in Section 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the project is categorically exempt under Classes 1, 3, and 14.

6. LIST OF PREPARERS

Mariana Zimmerman, Associate Principal

Alen Estrada-Rodas, Senior Associate

Natalie Phan, Planner

Cary Nakama, Graphic Specialist

7. REFERENCES

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