



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Cold Springs Lookout Tower Electricity Distribution Line Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Cold Spring Mountain off Signal Ridge Road T14N; R15W; Section 28 and 33; T13N; R15W; Section 4; Mt. Diablo Base & Meridian	COUNTY	Mendocino
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Julie Rhoads, Forester II		
ADDRESS	CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit - VMP 802 North Main Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437	PHONE	707-671-3357

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this project is to reestablish electricity to the Cold Springs Lookout near Philo in Mendocino County which houses repeater and ancillary radio infrastructure. Facilities have been powered by generators since storms damaged overland distribution lines three years ago. New electrical infrastructure will be installed by undergrounding a distribution line in the road prism of Signal Ridge Road, the access route to the facility. Portions of the road are maintained by Mendocino County and others are privately owned. The project includes the installation of approximately 2 miles (10,440 feet) of 4-inch electrical conduit within a designated 40-foot-wide corridor, centered 20 feet on either side of the existing road centerline. The conduit will be installed in a trench approximately 2 feet wide x 3 feet deep, with pull strings included in all conduit sections to facilitate future cable installation. Trenches will be backfilled in compacted lifts, and the road will be resurfaced with compacted gravel. Occasional trees along the roadside will be removed to accommodate a 15-foot vertical clearance for safe and effective equipment access or where their location interferes with the placement of splice boxes or conduit. Ten ditch relief culverts and one stream crossing culvert on Signal Ridge Road will be replaced where equipment cannot tunnel underneath to reach required depth. Culvert replacements will occur in the same locations and existing configurations. Property access agreements will be obtained from landowners. The contractor for this project will coordinate with PG&E for inspections and final energization of the system. This project ensures reliable service to critical communications facilities.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4- Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The project meets the requirements of a CEQA Article 19 Class 4 Categorical exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" (Section 15304, Public Resources Code) as the proposed activities include minor trenching and backfilling in a disturbed area and limited vegetation and tree removal. As such, CAL FIRE has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities, and service systems, or to wildfire. No exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit, 802 N. Main Street. Fort Bragg, CA 95437 Attn. VMP Coordinator.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

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1/29/2026

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director
 Resource Protection and Improvement
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Date