

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Caltrans, District 3
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901

Project Title: Donner Summit Safety Roadside Rest Area Rehabilitation Project

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation, District 3

Project Location - Specific: Interstate 80 in Nevada County at postmiles R 5.6

Project Location - City: Soda Springs, CA Project Location - County: Nevada

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing a Safety Roadside Rest Area (SRRA) Rehabilitation Project along Interstate 80 (I-80) at post mile (PM) R5.6 in Nevada County. The proposed project would upgrade existing potable water and sewer lines servicing both the eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) Donner Summit SRRA comfort stations.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Transportation, District 3

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation, District 3

Exempt Status (**check one**):

- ☐ 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: 15301; Existing Facilities
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project 15301 criteria consisting 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."

Lead Agency Contact Person: Rajpreet Bains

Phone number: 530-812-4236

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Signature: Rajpreet Bains Date: 02/03/2026 Title: Environmental Scientist

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☒ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Donner Summit Safety Roadside Rest Area Rehabilitation Project

DIST-CO-RTE: 03-NEV-80

PM/PM: R5.6

EA: 03-3J790

Federal-Aid Project Number: Not Applicable

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing a Safety Roadside Rest Area (SRRA) Rehabilitation Project along Interstate 80 (I-80) at post mile (PM) R5.6 in Nevada County. The proposed project would upgrade existing potable water and sewer lines servicing both the eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) Donner Summit SRRA comfort stations (continued on page 3).

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.** (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

Dotrik Wilson

Dotrik Wilson

01/26/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Sean Shaw

Sean M. Shaw

01/26/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date



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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)(12)**

☐ **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

Dotrik Wilson

Dotrik Wilson

01/26/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Sean Shaw

Sean M. Shaw

1 /26/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 01/26/2026

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 01/26/2026

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).



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Continuation sheet:

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable place for drivers to combat fatigue and plan their trips.

Need: The existing potable water and sewer lines at the Donner Summit SRRA have reached the end of their life span and do not meet current Caltrans standards. This has increased the risk of failure, which, if realized, would require rest area/highway closure and emergency repairs.

Scope of Work

Work would include the following:

- Installation of traffic control devices and signage. A minimum of one paved traffic lane, not less than 11-feet-wide, shall be open for use. The maximum length of any lane closure shall be limited to approximately 0.25 mile.
- From the service point at PM R5.4 to the EB comfort station, the existing 8-inch-diameter by 1,500-feet-long sewer line and 6-inch-diameter by 1,500-feet long water line would be abandoned in place and a new trench would be constructed to place new 8-inch-diameter sewer and water lines. The maximum depth of trenching would be approximately 8 feet.
- From the EB comfort station to the WB comfort station ("the crossover"), a new approximately 890-feet-long underground utility alignment would be constructed to relocate the existing electrical and communication lines from the existing trench into a new trench. Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and/or trenching would be used for this new alignment.
- At the crossover, the existing sewer and water lines would be removed and replaced.
- Three (3) existing 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-deep by 8-foot-long joint-junction vaults would be removed and replaced.
- A new underground backflow preventer would be installed near the main service point at PM R5.4.
- One temporary construction easement would be required near the existing public service connection to facilitate construction.
- Clearing and grubbing would be necessary at the median and/or roadsides for the new utility alignment. Tree removal is not anticipated.
- Ramps and parking areas would be repaved as needed.
- Permanent erosion control consisting of native seed mix and fiber rolls would be applied along the roadside and median where soil disturbance occurs.
- Potential relocation of signs and lighting may occur within the project limits, as needed.

The rest area would remain closed during construction with construction anticipated to begin in 2028 and last approximately 105 working days. Night work may be required.

Right of Way/Staging

All staging would occur within the existing Caltrans right of way. One (1) temporary construction easement would be required in order to facilitate construction.



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Disposal/Borrow

No material borrow is anticipated. Surplus excavated material would be hauled to a landfill and none would be disposed on site.

Consultation/Coordination

No consultation or coordination would be required.

Permits/Approvals

No environmental permits or approvals would be required.