



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

**Project Information**

**Project Name:** RIV 215 HIGH-TENSION CABLE BARRIER NORTHBOUND

**DIST-CO-RTE:** 08-RIV-215

**PM/PM:** 24.1/24.6

**EA:** 08-1R010

**PN:** 0824000227

**Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

**Project Description**

Caltrans proposes installing approximately 2,640 feet of high-tension cable barrier (HTCB) along the right shoulder of northbound Interstate 215 from Postmile (PM) 24.1 to PM 24.6 in the city of Perris in Riverside County. New safety standards require all side slopes to be 4:1 or flatter behind HTCB, requiring additional grading. All work is within operational State Right of Way.

There will be road cut/fill, equipment staging areas, shoulder backing, ground disturbance, and vegetation removal for the installation of the HTCB. No connections to new infrastructure nor utility relocations are anticipated. This project is State and Federally funded. (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)(c).** (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**

Kourtney Graves	<i>Kourtney Graves</i>	2/17/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

**Project Manager**

Touhida Haider	<i>Touhida Haider</i>	2/17/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date



# CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

## 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)(4): Projects activities that are included in the State’s highway safety plan)**

**23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (X)(X)**

**Activity X 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

Kourtney Graves

Print Name

*Kourtney Graves*

Signature

2/17/2026

Date

## Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Touhida Haider

Print Name

*Touhida Haider*

Signature

2/17/2026

Date

**Date of NEPA Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 2/17/2026**

**Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 2/17/2026**



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

### Continuation sheet:

Upon field review, it was found that all work is within State Right of Way, TCEs are no longer required. This project is currently funded from the SHOPP program in the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year.

#### **Purpose and Need:**

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to improve safety performance and to reduce the severity of runoff-road collisions within the project limits along I-215. Need: Several fatal and serious injury collisions resulting from vehicles running off the road beyond the outside shoulder have occurred within the project limits along I-215. The project proposes to reduce the severity of collisions at this location by installing HTCB.

The following technical documentation was prepared in conjunction with determining and addressing applicable California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and compliance requirements.

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### **Screened Undertaking Memorandum: December 3, 2025.**

In coordination with District Cultural Studies, the studies for this undertaking were carried out in a manner consistent with Caltrans' regulatory responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800) and pursuant to the December 2024 *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Sacramento District, San Francisco District, and Los Angeles District, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California* (Section 106 PA).

The provisions of Section 106 PA, Attachment 2, have been applied to this project. This project falls under: Class 1, "Pavement reconstruction, resurfacing, shoulder backing, or placement of seal coats," Class 11, "Modification of existing features, such as slopes, ditches, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, dikes, or headwalls, within or adjacent to the right of way," Class 13, "Addition or replacement of devices, such as glare screens, median barriers, fending, guardrails, safety barriers, energy attenuators, guide-posts, markers, safety cables, ladders, lighting, hoists, or signs," and Class 25 "Establishment, replacement, or removal of landscaping, vegetation, or irrigation systems on state or local public property, including highway and local roads rights of way and building sites".

Based on this review of materials, resources, and analyses, the undertaking is exempt from further review, no additional archaeological or built environment studies are required at this time and the Section 106 compliance process, CEQA cultural resources component, and PRC 5024 compliance are complete. This memorandum documents compliance with the agreed-upon historic preservation procedures.

### Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **CR-1:** If buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.
- **CR-2:** In the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Gabrielle Duff, DEBC: (909) 501-5142, and Julie Scrivner, DNAC: (909) 260-8265. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

### PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### **Email to File: February 5, 2026.**

In coordination with District Paleontology, due to the nature of the project description, no paleontological studies will be required for this project.



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### **Natural Environmental Study, Minimal Impacts (NES-MI): February 3, 2026.**

Caltrans has determined that due to adjacent suitable habitat for Federal/State-listed and other special-status species, avoidance, and minimization measures to avoid potential impacts are required. Accordingly, pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), Caltrans has determined that the proposed project would result in "No Effect" to federally listed species and designated critical habitat, and Section 7 Consultation would not be required. Pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the proposed project would result in "No Take" to State-listed or Candidate species and would not cause species of special concern and rare species and would not cause species of special concern and rare species to trend towards becoming listed. The project does not require a 2081 incidental take permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

The project is located within the boundaries of the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRMSHCP) and is considered a covered activity under Volume 1 Sections 7.1 and 7.3.4 of the Plan. A consistency analysis report was submitted to the agencies on January 12, 2026. No further action is required for the work within the WR-MSHCP.

Caltrans does not anticipate impacts to jurisdictional waters of the U.S. or State, and no in channel work is required. Therefore, the Project does not require regulatory permits, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 404 of the Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) 401 of the Clean Water Act, and CDFW Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code. The project will adhere to Caltrans standard best management practices.

### Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **BIO-General-1 Biological Monitor:** The qualified contractor-supplied biologist (CSB) must monitor project activities daily, or as deemed necessary by the CSB in coordination with the Caltrans Biologist. The CSB will ensure that measures are implemented and documented to avoid incidental disturbance of habitat and species of concern outside the project footprint.
- **BIO-General-2 Equipment Staging, Storing & Borrow Sites:** All equipment staging, storing, and borrow sites require the approval of the Caltrans Biologist.
- **Bio-General-3 Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP):** A qualified biologist must present a biological resource information program/WEAP for all special-status species prior to project activities to all personnel that will be present within the project limits for longer than 30 minutes at any given time.
- **BIO-General-4 WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practice:** The footprint of disturbance shall be minimized to the maximum extent feasible. Access to sites shall be via pre-existing access routed to the greatest extent possible.
- **BIO-General-5 WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practices:** The removal of native vegetation shall be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Temporary impacts shall be returned to pre-existing contours and revegetated with appropriate native species.
- **BIO-General-6 WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practices:** Exotic species that prey upon or displace target species of concern should be permanently removed from the site to the extent feasible.
- **BIO-General-7 WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practices:** Construction employees shall strictly limit their activities, vehicles, equipment, and construction materials to the proposed project footprint and designated staging areas and routes of travel. The construction area(s) shall be minimal area necessary to complete the project and shall be specified in the construction plans. Construction limits will be fenced with orange snow screen. Exclusion fencing should be maintained until the completion of all construction activities. Employees shall be instructed that their activities are restricted to the construction areas.



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

- **BIO-General-8 WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practices:** Construction employees shall strictly limit their activities, vehicles, equipment, and construction materials to the proposed project footprint and designated staging areas and routes of travel. The construction area(s) shall be the minimal area necessary to complete the project and shall be specified in the construction plans. Construction limits will be fenced with orange snow screen. Exclusion fencing should be maintained until the completion of all construction activities. Employees shall be instructed that their activities are restricted to the construction areas.
- **BIO-General-9: WR-MSHCP Appendix C Best Management Practices:** The Permittee shall have the right to access and inspect any sites of approved projects including any restoration/enhancement area for compliance with project approval conditions including these BMPs.
- **BIO-Plant-1 Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA):** The northern area where Narrow Endemic Plants were identified will exclude construction activities. No construction will occur within the ESA denoted on the Project plans and Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) will be installed before construction begins and denoted on the Project plans. THVF will be installed during the bloom season for *Centromadia pungens* ssp. *Laevis* (April – September) before construction begins.
- **BIO-Plant-2 Pre-construction Plant Surveys:** Preconstruction special-status plant surveys must be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to project activities and prior to temporary high-visibility fence installation. If a rare plant is located, the Resident Engineer and Caltrans Biologist must be contacted, and additional measures and/or agency coordination may be required.
- **BIO-Plant-3 Special-Status Plant Avoidance:** All special-status plant individuals or populations shall be marked for avoidance during project related activities. Flagging should be clearly marked with high visibility flagging, and flagging maintained throughout the duration of construction activities. A biological monitor shall be present part-time, or as determined by the Caltrans Biologist, at all locations near smooth tarplant to ensure that Project Activities are not resulting in any disturbance or impacts to smooth tarplant. The qualified biologist will supervise the removal of fencing once project activities have concluded.
- **BIO-Avian-1 Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys:** If project activities cannot avoid the nesting season, generally regarded as Feb 1 – Sept 30, then preconstruction nesting bird surveys must be conducted 3 days prior to construction by a qualified biologist to locate and avoid nesting birds. If an active avian nest is located, a no construction buffer may be established and monitored by the qualified biologist and/or monitored until the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.
- **BIO-BUOW-1 Pre-Construction Burrowing Owl Surveys:** Two burrowing owl preconstruction surveys must be performed within the project limits: one survey 30 days prior to project activities, and one survey 24 hours prior to project activities. If burrowing owls have colonized the project site prior to the initiation of ground disturbing activities, the project proponent will immediately inform the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) and the Wildlife Agencies and will need to coordinate further with RCA and the Wildlife Agencies, including the possibility of preparing a Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan, prior to initiating ground disturbance. If ground disturbing activities occur, but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a preconstruction survey will again be necessary to ensure burrowing owl has not colonized the site since it was last disturbed. If burrowing owl is found, the same coordination described above will be necessary.
- **BIO-BEE-1: Pre-construction Crotch's bumble bee survey:** Prior to construction activities, including vegetation removal, a qualified biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys according to the 2023 CDFW Survey Considerations for Candidate Bumble Bee. If the species is identified on site, the species shall be fully avoided. If the Project may result in take of Crotch's bumble bee, or if complete avoidance of Crotch's bumble bee cannot be achieved, California Endangered Species Act (CESA) authorization shall be obtained prior to initiation of Project activities.



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

### HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Initial Site Assessment (ISA) Checklist: September 2, 2025.**

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, the hazardous waste potential for the project area is Low Risk. Aerial Deposited Lead (ADL) is non-hazardous.

### NOISE

**Noise Memorandum: January 17, 2026.**

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, this is not a Type I project according to the project description. Therefore, a noise study is not required.

- **NOI-1:** If there will be night and/or Sunday work, SSP14-8.02 should be applied.

### GREENHOUSE GASES (GHG)/CLIMATE CHANGE

**Construction GHG Emissions Analysis: December 31, 2025.**

The project is not capacity increasing and would not increase the vehicle capacity of Interstates/State Routes. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes, no increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would occur. Therefore, no increase in operational GHG emissions is anticipated.

Construction of the project would temporarily increase GHG emissions during the construction phase of the project. The estimated maximum daily construction emissions, calculated using CAL-CET2021 v1.0.4, were measured in terms of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2e</sub>). Construction of the project is estimated to last 50 working days and generate a total of 46 metric tons of CO<sub>2e</sub>.

While the proposed project will result in GHG emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project will not result in any increase in operational GHG emissions. With implementation of the following construction GHG reduction measures, the impact would be less than significant.

### Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- **GHG/CC-1:** Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel [1] powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- **GHG/CC-2:** Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- **GHG/CC-3:** For improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment:
  - Maintain equipment in proper tune and working condition
  - Use right sized equipment for the job
  - Use equipment with new technologies

### AIR QUALITY

**Air Quality Memorandum: December 31, 2025.**

### **Transportation Air Quality Conformity Findings Checklist**

In coordination with District Environmental Engineering, this project has been evaluated as an exempt project that falls under the broad category of exempt project type "*safety improvement program*" listed under listed under Table 1 of Caltrans Carbon Monoxide Protocol and Table 2 of 40 CFR 93.126. All projects listed under these tables are exempt from conformity analysis. An air quality report is not needed. However, a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) analysis is needed for construction emissions.



## CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

**Permits and Agreements:** According to the Natural Environment Study (NES), dated February 3, 2026, no permits are required.

*In conjunction with the results of the above technical documentation, the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measure(s) included in the Environmental Commitments Record (ECR), are expected to be implemented, as applicable. Changes to the project's scope of work, will require that the District's Division of Environmental Planning be notified in a timely manner, to determine if an Environmental Re-Evaluation will be required to confirm that the environmental documentation for NEPA/CEQA compliance, remains valid.*

*Updates to the original Technical Studies, or preparation of new Technical Studies may be required, and/or a new CE/CE Determination Form may need to be completed, and/or an Environmental Document may need to be prepared and approved, to document the project's compliance with all applicable NEPA/CEQA requirements.*