

Notice of Exemption

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

From: Caltrans District 2
1657 Riverside Drive
Redding, CA 96001

Project Title: Caltrans Encroachment Permit 02-26-6-BB-0051 for the ADF-G10-CD2-UG1

Project Applicant: American Dark Fiber, LLC

Project Location - Specific: State Route 273 in Shasta County at post mile R16.396L (at the intersection with South Street in Redding)

Project Location - City: Redding Project Location - County: Shasta

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

American Dark Fiber, LLC (ADF), in coordination with the California Department of Technology and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to install broadband infrastructure consisting of conduit, fiber optic cable, vaults, and markers on State Route 273 (SR 273) at post mile (PM) R16.396 in Shasta County.

This project would include the installation of approximately 10,000-miles of broadband infrastructure throughout California within the State Highway System, including Interstate routes.

Due to the varied topography and locations of the 10,000-mile broadband infrastructure across the State of California, the design would be dependent on project site features. Work would include the installation of subsurface broadband conduit and fiber, the installation of network repeater hubs at approximately 50-mile intervals, as well as the installation of vaults (Pull, Splice, and Buried) at various locations.

All work will take place within 30-feet of highway rights-of-way except where not feasible. The areas of project impact in most areas will be limited to the existing paved surfaces, disturbed shoulders, and maintained Caltrans right-of-way.

Purpose: This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project will install the broadband

infrastructure along the State Highway System (SHS) necessary to connect to a third party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which will bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Need: In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring high-speed broadband service to all Californians.

The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband Internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Scope of Work

Work would include the following:

- Placement of temporary traffic control devices and signage.
- Open trench installation of approximately 60 linear feet of high-density polyethylene conduit and fiber optic cable.
- Excavation of 1 (one) approximately 3 foot by 5 foot by 3 foot bore pit.
- Installation of 1 (one) approximately 5 foot by 3 foot by 3 foot standard polycrrete vault.
- Installation of markers throughout the project limits.
- Backfilling the trench with slurry cement (if trench width is less than 24 inches), compacted aggregate base (if the trench width is greater than 24 inches), or original soil in areas of unimproved surface.
- Cold-planed surface and overlay with Hot Mixed Asphalt (HMA) or Asphalt Concrete (AC) to replace pavement section of disturbed areas. Must conform to existing pavement depth and Section 39 of the Standard Specifications.
- Replacement in kind of pavement markings and/or striping.
- Application of erosion control.

Right of Way/Staging

All work and staging would occur within the existing Caltrans right of way.

Disposal/Borrow

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

Permits/Approvals

Caltrans would issue an encroachment permit with specific conditions of approval. No other environmental permits or approvals would be required.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans (for issuance of encroachment permit)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: American Dark Fiber, LLC

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: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Public Resources Code Section 21080.51

Reasons why project is exempt:


Senate Bill 156 (chaptered July 21, 2021) added section 21080.51 to the California Public Resources Code (PRC) to exempt by statute Middle Mile Broadband Network projects. As such, Caltrans has determined that the project is exempt by statute in accordance with PRC Section 21080.51. The project would have no significant effect on the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: David DeMar

Phone number: (530) 759-3406

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:  Date: 4/1/2026 Title: Branch Chief

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.