

Notice of Exemption

To: California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
From: University of California, San Diego
Campus Planning, MC 0074
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, California 92093-0074

Project Title: UC San Diego Battery Energy Storage System Addition

Project Location: UC San Diego Central Utilities Plant; 9239 Herbert York Lane (APN 760-2579-102)

Project Location – City: La Jolla 92093

Project Location – County: San Diego

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project (Project Description): The Regents of the University of California, University of California San Diego campus (UC San Diego), owns and operates an existing microgrid electrical distribution system with onsite generation and storage. The microgrid is powered by UC San Diego's existing energy infrastructure and consists of a 30-megawatt (MW) electric cogeneration plant, 3 MW of existing solar photovoltaic (PV), a former lithium-ion battery energy storage system (BESS) currently in the process of decommissioning, and all electrical assets including 12 kV distribution lines, high voltage switchgear, transformers, and associated metering equipment downstream of a 69 kilovolt (kV) substation which is co-owned and operated by San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) and UC San Diego. SDG&E provides transmission and distribution services only.

The project will replace the microgrid's existing lithium-ion BESS with a larger, more efficient, modern, and safer BESS with a nameplate capacity of 8 MW/ 32 MWh. The more efficient BESS would not result in higher energy consumption or expansion of the utilities plant. The alteration of the microgrid's BESS resources will secure the UC San Diego microgrid's reliability, connect to the existing 12 kV system, mitigate peak load at the SDG&E substation, and provide Resource Adequacy (RA) to the local Load Serving Entity (LSE) San Diego Community Power (SDCP). The upgraded BESS will occupy the same physical footprint previously sited, graded, and prepared for a canceled energy storage system formerly planned as part of the UC San Diego Central Utilities Plant (CUP) Expansion. The project site is approximately one-half acre of graded, paved, and prepared land previously sited for a thermal energy storage system. The new BESS will interconnect to the bulk electricity system at the same interconnection point as the previous lithium-ion BESS, specifically the 69 kV substation (APN 3431-6040-00) operated by SDG&E. The project will utilize existing electrical infrastructure and connect to the bulk electricity system at the same SDG&E interconnection point as the previous lithium-ion BESS.

As part of the project, the current BESS will be removed and decommissioned. Work required to install the new BESS containers includes the construction of new concrete footings for the battery containers and transformers, 180 feet of underground trenching between the containers and the 12 kV switchgear, installation of underground electrical conduits and associated conductor pulls, replacement fill and poured concrete, and crane lifts for each of the containers and transformers. The project will result in negligible or no expansion of use of the CUP beyond that already existing.

UC San Diego, with approval authority delegated by The Regents of the University of California, has deemed the project as an allowed modification to the existing CUP. The installation of the upgraded BESS, which is a component of the microgrid, will be a minor alteration of an existing utility system for the CUP, with no physical expansion beyond the existing footprint planned for the now decommissioned thermal energy storage system. The project delivery method would be through a private-public partnership.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: University of California San Diego

Parties Undertaking Project: University of California San Diego and EnerSmart Storage Holdings, LLC

Exempt Status:

- 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: Section 15301: Class 1, Existing Facilities
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 20180.35
- General Exemption (Sec. 15061(b)(3)).

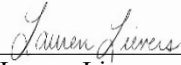
Reason Why Project is Exempt:

California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301, subdivision (b) (Class 1: Existing Facilities) provides that the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures,

facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, such as existing facilities of investor and publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. The project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301, Class 1: Existing Facilities because the project consists of the minor alteration of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former land use. While the battery capacity would be increased, this would not result in higher energy consumption or expansion of the utilities plant and is instead intended to secure reliability. The upgrade of the existing BESS is not located on or adjacent to an environmentally sensitive site; will not result in a significant cumulative impact; there is no reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; it will not damage resources within a scenic highway; it will not cause substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic resource; and it is not located on a listed site pursuant to Government Code 65962.5. Therefore, none of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Lauren Lievers
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Signature:



Lauren Lievers

Title:

Principal Environmental Planner, UC San Diego Campus Planning

Date:

April 4, 2026