



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
MEGHAN HERTEL, Director

South Coast Region
3883 Ruffin Road
San Diego, CA 92123
wildlife.ca.gov

To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
[CEQA Submit](#)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Big Canyon Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resiliency Project: Phase 3 Project (Streambed Alteration Agreement No. EPIMS-ORA-36265-R5)

Project Location (Orange County): The Project is located at Big Canyon Creek and the confluence to Upper Newport Bay, in the City of Newport Beach, Orange County, CA.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has amended Streambed Alteration Agreement No. EPIMS-ORA-36265-R5, pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code to the Newport Bay Conservancy as represented by Heather Cieslak.

The Project is the final phase of this multi-phase habitat restoration project in the Big Canyon Nature Park. Project activities include the use of a bulldozer, backhoe, steel-tracked excavator mounted with a hydraulic concrete breaker and thumb attachments, front end loader, grader, and amphibious equipment for dredging. The Project was amended to alter Measure 2.8 Nesting Bird Protection.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:

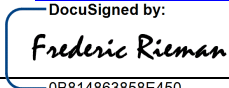
Heather Cieslak
Newport Bay Conservancy
P.O. Box 10804
Newport Beach, CA 92658
info@newportbay.org

Exempt Status: On March 24, 2022, the City of Newport Beach (City) made a preliminary determination that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive. On May 4, 2022, the Director of CDFW concurred with the City's preliminary determination. On May 14, 2025, the City as

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
EPIMS-ORA-36265-R5
April 13, 2026
Page 2

CEQA lead agency made a final determination that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive, and the City determined that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.1(a), the Lead Agency is responsible for determining whether the Project is exempt from CEQA and that determination shall be final and conclusive on all persons, including Responsible Agencies. AS a result, CDFW, now acting as a CEQA Responsible Agency, is bound by the Lead Agency's determination that the Project is exempt from CEQA.

CDFW Contact Person: Frederic (Fritz) Rieman, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), (562) 619-0605, Frederic.Rieman@Wildlife.ca.gov.

Signature:  Date: 4/13/2026
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Frederic (Fritz) Rieman, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), acting for Victoria Tang, Environmental Program Manager

Date received for filing at LCI: