



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Drainage North of Soda Springs

DIST-CO-RTE: 05-MON-001

PM/PM: 4.1-4.2

EA: 05-1T240

Federal-Aid Project Number: 0525000219

Project Description: Due to storms in late December 2025 and continuing into January 2026 in Monterey County, on route 001 at postmile 4.1/4.2 debris flow that partially clogged and overwhelmed the culvert system; resulting in debris and water over-topping the roadway while also eroding an embankment and berm on coastal side of highway, leading to a highway closure. The emergency project proposes to replace the existing riser located at the inlet. A new drainage inlet box will be placed at the inlet, so the new riser is supported and secure. Remove excess sediment and debris from around the inlet for 30' from the inlet and grade area to drain. Roadway excavation, followed by culvert, HMA paving, repair berm and embankment. The purpose is to repair existing drainage and meet increasing drainage needs for the facility to perform up to safe and functioning standards.

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

Sunny McBride		3/23/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Victor Devens		3/26/26
Print Name	Signature	Date



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

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, 2019, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

X **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(9i)**

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 December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Sunny McBride		3/23/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Victor Devens		3/26/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Measures and Minimizations

Visual: Although no significant visual impacts are expected to occur as a result of the project, the following measures would ensure that the project will be consistent with the character of the corridor and potential visual effects of the project would be minimized:

1. Preserve as much existing vegetation as possible. Prescriptive clearing and grubbing and grading techniques which save the most existing vegetation possible should be employed.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

2. Revegetate all disturbed areas, including staging areas/access roads, with native plant species appropriate to each specific work location if appropriate and feasible based on a permanent erosion control recommendation by District 5 Landscape Architecture.
3. Following construction, re-grade and re-contour all new construction access roads, staging areas, and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding pre-project topography.
4. If metal drainage components such as down drains, flared end sections (FES), connectors, risers, anchorage systems, safety cable systems, ect. are used, they should be darkened or colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity.
5. If concrete drainage elements such as headwalls, drain inlet aprons, etc. are used, they should be colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. Consult with District 5 Landscape Architecture for color recommendation.

Biological:

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Among other requirements listed in the Technically Conditioned 401 Certification of Regional General Permit 5, you are required to:

1. Pursuant to section VI.H.3, submit a fee of \$4,212 to the Central Coast Water Board.
2. Pursuant to section VI.C.6, implement effective best management practices to control erosion and runoff from areas associated with the emergency project, including access road construction and maintenance.
3. Pursuant to section VI.E.1, all areas of temporary impacts must be restored to pre-project conditions.
4. Pursuant to VI. F. Water Quality Monitoring: If surface water is present, continuous visual monitoring shall be conducted during active construction to detect accidental discharge of construction related pollutants (e.g., oil and grease, turbidity plume, or uncured concrete).
5. Fill in and submit within 45 days of project completion, including implementation of the mitigation, the Notice of Completion form ([Attachment E](#)) to the Central Coast Water Board and the State Water Board.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Minimization of Adverse Effects for Emergency Repair Activities

Smith's blue butterfly: During Emergency Repair Activities

1. If possible, ensure that emergency repair projects will be implemented to avoid or reduce adverse effects to Smith's blue butterflies and their habitat wherever possible.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

2. If possible, avoid work between June 15 and September 15, when Smith's blue butterfly adults, eggs, and larvae may be present. Pupae may be present throughout the year, but are immobile and unlikely to be present far from buckwheat host plants.
3. If possible, ensure that ground disturbance for emergency repair project activities will not begin within or adjacent to stands of buckwheat host plants, seacliff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*) or seaside buckwheat (*Eriogonum latifolium*), until a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologist is on site.
4. Ensure that only qualified biologists will participate in capture, handling, and monitoring of the Smith's blue butterfly, in all of its life stages, and the handling of buckwheat host plants.
5. If possible, for emergency repair activities within or adjacent to stands of buckwheat host plants, a qualified biologist will survey the work site before the onset of ground disturbance. If any life stage of the Smith's blue butterfly or its buckwheat host plants are found and are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist will relocate buckwheat host plants, duff, and/or soil, from the site before work activities begin the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by activities associated with the proposed project. The buckwheat host plants, duff, and/or soil will be hand removed and placed as close as possible to, but not on living buckwheat host plants. The qualified biologist will maintain detailed records of the number and location of buckwheat host plants that are moved.
6. If possible, before any maintenance or project activity work begins within stands of buckwheat, a qualified biologist will provide training to all field personnel. At a minimum, the training will include a description of the Smith's blue butterfly and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the Smith's blue butterfly, and boundaries within which the project may be accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is available to answer any questions.
7. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of the activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to Smith's blue butterfly and buckwheat host plants.
8. A qualified biologist will be present at the work site for emergency repair project activities within or adjacent to stands of buckwheat host plants until all Smith's blue butterflies and buckwheat host plants that are at risk due to project activities have been removed, workers have been instructed, and disturbance to habitat has been completed.

Smith's blue butterfly: After Completion of Emergency Repair Activities



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

1. Conduct revegetation efforts in all disturbed areas including those that are outside of those impacted by buckwheat host plant removal. Develop and implement a restoration and erosion control plan for disturbed sites. An assemblage of native species will be used for revegetation of disturbed sites that includes the appropriate locally-procured buckwheat seed for the site. Buckwheat host plant seeds or individuals will only be placed outside the vegetation control areas located within 10 feet of either side of the developed roadway or shoulder. Monitor these disturbed areas and the immediate vicinity for invasive weed species every 6 months for the first year and annually thereafter for a total of 5 years. Any invasive weed species present, including seedlings, will be removed without damaging buckwheat host plants. A 10-foot no spray buffer will be established around Smith's blue butterfly host plants within which invasive species will be controlled by hand.
2. The spread of invasive weeds during revegetation efforts will be controlled according to the Vegetation Management Guidelines (California Department of Transportation 2002) developed as part of the Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan (California Department of Transportation 2004).
3. Prohibit mowing and broadcast spraying of herbicide in or adjacent to stands of buckwheat host plants. Within areas that contain buckwheat host plants, control of invasive weeds, which is beneficial to buckwheat host plants, will be achieved by spot spraying of herbicide and/or hand clearing.
4. Ensure that best management practices are implemented according to the most current approved guidelines to control erosion and sedimentation during and after project implementation. Under the California Interagency Noxious Weed Free Forage and Mulch Program (<http://www.iscc.ca.gov/>), California is taking steps to make noxious weed-free hay and straw widely available. Under this program, weed-free hay and straw bales would be used for erosion control measures when they become available.
5. Submit to the Service a project report that will include the size and location of the disturbed sites, the number and location of Smith's blue butterfly individuals captured and relocated, or killed or injured, the number and location of relocated buckwheat host plants, and site restoration and erosion control plan.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

1. To minimize the potential for project-related impacts to ESA species, specifically, Smith's blue butterfly (*Euphilotes enoptes smithi*), you shall adhere to the avoidance and minimization measures provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Enclosure 3.
2. Precipitation and Construction Planning. Precipitation forecasts shall be considered when planning construction activities. You shall monitor the 72-hour forecast from the National Weather Service at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>. When there is a forecast of more than 40% chance



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

of rain, or at the onset of unanticipated precipitation, you shall remove all equipment from waters of the U.S., implement erosion and sediment control measures (e.g., jute, straw, coconut fiber erosion control fabric, coir logs, straw) to prevent discharge of stormwater runoff containing sediment to waters of the U.S., and cease all Project activities in waters of the U.S.

3. You shall comply with all terms and conditions set forth by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on February 9, 2026 (Enclosure 4). You shall consider such conditions to be an integral part of the RGP authorization for your project.

4. Excavation equipment shall work from an upland site (e.g., from the top of the bank, the roadbed of the bridge, or culverted road crossing) to minimize adding fill into waters of the U.S.

5. Any change in the project design, materials, or construction methods, must be approved by the Corps in writing.

6. A post-construction report shall be submitted 45 days after the conclusion of construction activities. The report shall document construction activities and contain as-built drawings (if different from drawings submitted with application) and include before and after photos. The report shall also document any deviation from the estimated impacts to waters of the U. S. and shall include an accurate description of project impacts, including the amount of fill discharged into waters of the U. S. (both temporary and permanent).