

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: **Department of Public Works/Transportation Division**
(Lead Department/Division)

Based on a preliminary review of the project the following activity is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (Pub. Res. Code Section 21000 et seq.), as defined in the State CEQA Guidelines and County Revised CEQA Guidelines.

APN(s): Right of Way **PROJECT NUMBER:** N/A

LOCATION: All Supervisorial Districts

PROJECT TITLE: Midwest Guardrail System Countywide; County Project No. 820797; Second, Fourth, and Fifth Supervisorial District

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core federal-aid program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic collisions and serious injuries on public roads by upgrading existing non-compliant guardrail to current engineering standards, Midwest Guardrail System. A countywide study on existing roads with existing guardrail, analyzed traffic collisions, crash potential, and crash rate. The study determined the locations that qualified for the HSIP program. The unincorporated areas of Santa Maria, Orcutt, Lompoc, and Goleta contain road sections with guardrail that is not up to current engineering standards or having a high collision rate. The proposed project would upgrade existing guardrail to current guardrail, *Midwest Guardrail System*. In addition, the project would reconstruct the embankment at each location, providing a stronger foundation for the *Midwest Guardrail System*. The project will include the following six locations:

2nd District Location:

- Las Palmas Dr, 220' north of Las Olas Drive

4th District Location:

- Harris Grade Rd, 14,200' south of State Route 135

5th District Locations:

- Betteravia Rd, 800' southeast of Simas Road
- Dominion Road at Palmer Rd
- Foxen Canyon Rd, 3,800' northwest of Santa Maria Mesa Road
- Foxen Canyon Rd, 1,600' southeast of Dominion Road

This item is on the agenda to approve the plans, specifications, award the construction contract, and approve a budget revision for the *Midwest Guardrail System* Countywide project to the lowest responsible bidder, Central Coast Fence Inc.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Santa Barbara

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Public Works Transportation Division

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption {15301(c)}
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section: 15301(c) Existing Facilities – Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency’s determination. The types of “existing facilities”, itemized below are not intended to be all inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use. Examples include but are not limited to: (c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety).

Reasons to support exemption findings: Consistent with this exemption, this proposed project involves activities related to the repair and maintenance activities for public highway and street facilities. The project allows for a public safety activity designed to maintain a safe working condition of the roadway facilities as they were constructed. Further, there are no unusual circumstances which would create a possibility that there would be a significant effect. Therefore, this project can be found to be categorically exempt from CEQA.

There is no substantial evidence that there are unusual circumstances (including future activities) resulting in (or which might reasonably result in) significant impacts which threaten the environment. The exceptions to the categorical exemptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines are:

- (a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located -- a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 is a Class 1 exemption; therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.**

The project involves upgrading existing non-compliant guardrail to current engineering standards to improve public safety. In addition, there are no other identified projects which would contribute to cumulative impacts. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.**

The project involves upgrading existing non-compliant guardrail to current engineering standards to improve public safety. The projects will occur at specific locations where there are no sensitive resources located. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.**

The project does not involve a scenic highway or a project which may result in damage to a scenic resource, removal of trees, rock outcropping or similar resource. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.**

There are no hazardous wastes site locations in the roadway right of way. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.**

The maintenance locations involved are not identified as a historical resource. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Mostafa Estaji, Deputy Director, Public Works-Transportation Division, Phone: (805) 568-3064.

Department/Division Representative: Kalani Durham, Engineering Environmental Planner/Coordinator.

Acceptance Date: **April 21, 2026**

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff for posting

Kalani Durham

March 9, 2026

Kalani Durham

Department Representative

Date

NOTE: A copy of this document must be posted comply with County CEQA guidelines and a copy must be filed with the County Clerk of the Board after project approval to begin a 35-day statute of limitations on legal challenges.

Distribution: Date Filed by County Clerk:

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