



State of California
Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
715 P Street, MS 1803
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: 762971_Group_SoCalGas_UGS

Project Applicant: Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas)

Project Location: Santa Barbara County, La Goleta Gas Field; Section 21, Township 04N, Range 28W, Base SB; 34.41874, -119.82505; located in an unincorporated area near the city of Goleta, 8 miles west of the city of Santa Barbara, and 1½ miles south of the US-101.

Project Description: SoCalGas is proposing to drill six replacement underground gas storage (UGS) wells within the existing La Goleta Natural Gas Storage Facility (La Goleta Facility). The six replacement UGS wells will be installed in the La Goleta Facility parcel owned by SoCalGas, in an existing facility of an investor-owned utility that uses the parcel to provide natural gas services.

The purpose of the project is to replace 120–240 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas deliverability of an estimated 280 MMSCFD that has been lost over the past years from the plugging and abandonment of nine UGS wells in compliance with CalGEM's 2018 regulations that establish standards for the design, construction, and maintenance of all gas storage wells.

The work included in the project consists of site preparation, drilling, completion and tying into existing facility flowlines/pipelines. Per the operator's project description, work locations will be accessed using existing access roads. All equipment will be staged within the project boundary (project area and staging areas). The project area will tie into an existing well pad using adjacent disturbed area historically used for agricultural purposes. The project area (0.99 acres) is located within the existing storage facility fence line. The project does not propose the construction of new or additional permanent facilities, nor does it propose expansion of existing facilities. The replacement wells will be tied into the existing facility flowlines/pipelines and utilize the existing infrastructure; electric power infrastructure is in place on the lease.



There is no proposed disturbance of native vegetation. Per the Historical Nesting Bird Survey Report prepared by the operator's consultant, the project area and staging area are situated in already disturbed locations with no available nesting structures. The work will comply with updated CalGEM regulations, and the project site will meet federal, state, and local guidelines.

The proposed project consists of the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), approving six permits for SoCalGas to drill the wells listed below, in the La Goleta Gas Field in Santa Barbara County.

API #	Well Name
0408323004	Goleta 2
0408323002	Goleta 3
0408323003	Goleta 4
0408323000	Goleta 5
0408323001	Goleta 6
0408322999	Goleta 7

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Exemption:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing Project (<i>pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973</i>)	21169	15261 (b)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Categorical Exemption:	21084		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 1: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 3: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 6: Information Collection		15306	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 7: Protection of Natural Resources		15307	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 8: Protection of the Environment		15308	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 11: Accessory Structures		15311	



Exemption Type		Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 21: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 30: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class 33: Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333	
<input type="checkbox"/>	General Exemption (“common sense”)		15061 (b)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not a “Project” subject to CEQA		15378 (b)(2)	
<p>CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR § 15300.2): where project is located (e.g., sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.</p>				

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1): The project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the “Class 1” (14 CCR § 15301) exemption per the CEQA Guidelines because the proposed project is a minor alteration of existing facilities and will not involve an expansion of use of the gas field beyond that existing previously, and therefore is exempt from the need for full CEQA review. This includes “publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services.” (14 CCR § 15301 (b).) The proposed project involves the drilling of six replacement UGS wells in the existing La Goleta Facility. The proposed replacement wells would not result in the expansion of existing facilities and would be drilled in order to continue to provide public utility services. A CalGEM engineer has confirmed that the proposed work is within the scope of the approved UGS project 36800001 and would be a continuation of operations with no expansion. The wells would not change the existing use of the gas storage facility and would not increase gas injection or withdrawal rates beyond previously existing levels. Therefore, the Class 1 exemption applies.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302): Class 2 consists of the “replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.” (14 CCR § 15302.) The purpose of the proposed project is to drill six replacement UGS wells in the existing La Goleta Facility to replace 120–240 MMSCFD of gas deliverability of an estimated 280 MMSCFD that has been lost over the past years from the plugging and abandonment of nine UGS wells at the La Goleta Facility. The six proposed new wells would be located within the same facility and would have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the wells they are proposed to replace. Therefore, the Class 2 exemption applies.



Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2): Class 4 consists of “drilling operations that result only in minor alterations with negligible or no permanent effects to the existing condition of the land, water, air, and/or vegetation.” (14 CCR § 1684.2; see also 14 CCR § 15304.) The proposed project involves the drilling of six replacement UGS wells in an existing disturbed area (0.99 acres) within the existing storage facility fence line and would be accessed by existing roads. The project does not propose expansion of existing facilities or disturbance of native vegetation. Therefore, there would be no significant surface disturbance that could impact the surrounding environment, and the Class 4 exemption applies.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, there is no substantial evidence that there are any “unusual circumstances” associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there are no significant “cumulative impacts” resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials can be made available to the public by contacting the CalGEM CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, MS 1803, Sacramento, CA 95814; by calling (916) 445-9686; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting CEQA@conservation.ca.gov. The notice filed with the State Clearinghouse may be accessed online at: <https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov>

Certified: *Nicole Trezza* **Date:** 4/30/2026
Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division