



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Salt Creek Canyon

DIST-CO-RTE: 03-COL-20

PM/PM: 0.0-R22.1

EA: 03-0L000

Federal Aid Project Number:

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to conduct a geotechnical investigation to evaluate subsurface conditions for the Salt Creek Canyon Project on State Route (SR) 20 between post miles 0.00 to R22.1 in Colusa County. The scope of geotechnical work includes subsurface investigation work for site geotechnical engineering characterization for the design and construction of the proposed project soldier pile walls with ground anchors, or soil nail walls earth retaining systems and associated widenings/embankments. The subsurface investigation program would involve drilling, visual logging, in-situ testing, and sampling of soil and rock from borings at the earth retaining systems (ERS) locations (see continuation page).

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 6.** (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

Thaleena Bhattal

Thaleena Bhattal

07/23/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Mary Fesliyan

Fesliyan Mary

07/23/2026

Print Name

Signature

Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

☒ **Not Applicable**

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, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

☐ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)()**

☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()**

☐ **Activity _ 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 May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Not Applicable

Print Name

Not Applicable

Signature

Not Applicable

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Not Applicable

Print Name

Not Applicable

Signature

Not Applicable

Date

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 3/10/2026



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Continuation sheet:

Caltrans proposes to establish a maximum of 14 borings at the ERS locations proposed at postmiles 10.85 westbound, 11.10 westbound, and 11.25 eastbound. Both vertical and deeper horizontal borings near ERS layouts are proposed to be drilling to 50 feet vertically and 50 feet horizontally.

The borings are expected to be placed in the alignment of the ERS foundation and near the toe or center of the support alignments. When considering factors such as utility conflicts, traffic, and safety allowances, it is expected that boring locations could be shifted as much as 20 feet from the planned locations. If adjusted, borings will not be placed outside of the proposed drilling operations work area depicted in the Final Site Investigation Plan (SIP) dated April 22, 2026.

Equipment Staging and Storage

Local turnout areas will be used to support vehicle and equipment staging. Equipment storage for the drilling operation is typically located at the local Caltrans Maintenance yard (Colusa or Williams). Water tenders, trailers, and drill rigs would be stored at the maintenance yard at the end of each workday. The crew cabs and geologist/engineer's vehicles will be transported off site at the end of each workday.

Disposal/Borrow

The drill rig system uses a self-contained fluid system consisting of a mud tub at the surface and a pump attached to the drill rig. The drilling fluid typically consists of natural bentonite with water or biodegradable copolymer gel with water. Once the drilling is complete, the fluid is then pumped into 55-gallon drums for disposal off-site. The 55-gallon steel drums will be removed from the job site and transferred to a temporary staging area, usually a nearby Caltrans Maintenance yard, satellite yard, or the Sacramento Caltrans TransLab. The drill cuttings would be lifted mechanically to the surface by continuous helical auger flights and then manually placed into 55-gallon drums for disposal off-site.

Right-of-Way

A permit to enter will be required for work within a private property. The work consists of drilling horizontally and conducting a geophysics survey on top of the slopes.

Consultation/Agency Coordination

Based on the proposed scope of work, no agency coordination will be required.

Permits/Approvals

Based on the proposed scope of work, no regulatory permits are required.



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Location, Access, and Hours of Work

Seismic Refraction Tomography (SRT) and/or Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) lines are anticipated to occur at the location above the retaining wall. It is anticipated that access to proposed survey locations will be by foot from unpaved access roads, roadways, or shoulders. All work is typically conducted during daylight hours, Monday through Friday, and may be modified with proper notification to increase the efficiency of the studies (i.e. 1-day work week with less mobilization).