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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

*GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor*
*MEGHAN HERTEL, Director*

Inland Deserts Region
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Suite C-220
Ontario, CA, 91764
wildlife.ca.gov

To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
CEQA Submit

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

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**Project Title:** Amendment No. 1 to the High Desert Operational Efficiency Project (Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration, No. EPIMS-SBR-57967-R6)

**Project Location (San Bernardino County):** The High Desert Operational Efficiency Project (Project) is located within the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) right-of-way within the City of Hesperia, San Bernardino County, State of California.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has amended Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement EPIMS Notification No. EPIMS-SBR-57967-R6, pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code for the BNSF Railway Company.

The Project consists of expanding the Project footprint by approximately 101.25-acres for a total work area of 207.28 acres. The expansion will result in permanent impacts to an additional 2.064 acres of Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources.

**Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:**
French Thompson
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad
General Director
(817) 352-2020
French.Thompson@BNSF.com
2650 Lou Menk Drive
Forth Worth, Texas 76131

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**Exempt Status:** On April 18, 2024, the California Department of Transportation, the Lead Agency, determined that the Project is statutorily exempt pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(10) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15275. The Lead Agency determined that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria for the exemption. 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, acting as a Responsible Agency, is bound by the Lead Agency's determination that the Project is exempt from CEQA.

**CDFW Contact Person:** Emily Leon, Environmental Scientist, (760) 644-5976, and Emily.Leon@wildlife.ca.gov

*Signature:* DocuSigned by: Alisa Ellsworth 84FBB8273E4C480... *Date:* 7/20/2026

Alisa Ellsworth, Environmental Program Manager

Date received for filing at LCI: