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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Alpine County SR 89 Fence Project

DIST-CO-RTE: 10-ALP-089 **PM/PM:** 15.3/20.1

EA: 10-1R340/1023000132 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** N/A

Project Description:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing to remove and replace deteriorated fencing along the northbound side of State Route 89, spanning from PM 15.3 to PM 20.1 in Alpine County. The existing fence, consisting of barbed wire (Type BW) and wire mesh (Type WM), will be replaced. As this stretch of SR-89 is a designated scenic route, wooden posts will be maintained to preserve the aesthetic integrity of the area.

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** 3(e). (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

Laura Cook	Laura N. Cook	4/2/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Jim Benton		4/2/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

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

n/a	n/a	n/a
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

n/a	n/a	n/a
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 04/02/2026
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 04/02/2026

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

Continuation sheet:

Purpose and Need:
The purpose of this project is to remove and replace existing, deteriorated fencing along State Route (SR) 89 between the cities of Alpine Village and Markleeville, in Alpine County. The fence installation will re-establish the access control and demarcation of the existing State's Right-of -Way (R/W).

Description of work:
This project involves the removal and replacement of deteriorated fencing along the northbound side of SR-89, spanning from PM 15.3 to PM 20.1 in Alpine County. The existing fence, consisting of barbed wire (Type BW) and wire mesh (Type WM), will be replaced. As this stretch of SR-89 is a designated scenic route, wooden posts will be maintained to preserve the aesthetic integrity of the area.

General:
The project is Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act and Categorically Excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act unless: (1) the scope of the project changes to include additional activities or areas; or (2) there is unforeseen discovery of sensitive or cultural resources. Environmental revaluation will be required if either of these conditions are met.

Air:
Per the Air Quality Memo, dated August 18, 2025, the proposed project is not expected to cause any operational effects on air pollutants.

Construction greenhouse gas emissions are estimated at 29 tons for the duration of the 38 working days. Operational climate change emissions do not need to be estimated because the project is not at capacity increasing.

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code § 11017.

Biology:
Field surveys within the project Biological Study Area (BSA) were conducted to assess existing natural resources and potential impacts. Per the Biological Resources Evaluation Memo, dated May 09, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

The project will have “no effect” on any:

- California Endangered Species (CESA) ACT-listed plant species, Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)-listed plant species, California Native Plant Protection Act-listed species, and any California “rare” plant species.

- FESA-listed, CESA-listed animal species, California species of concern, California Fully Protected Species, or CNDDB tracked wildlife species considered for environmental review.

- Special status habitats or vegetation communities for environmental review.

Suitable wildlife friendly fence designs will be implemented to comply with Streets and Highways Code 158 requiring the Department to remediate barriers on the State Highway System for wildlife. There are no CA essential habitat connective layers located within the project area along SR-89. Project impacts are expected to occur within existing state ROW.

For any work that is scheduled between February 1 and September 30, preconstruction surveys for nesting migratory birds or raptors would be performed by a qualified biologist 14 days before construction-related activities. If migratory bird or raptor nests are observed during preconstruction surveys or construction, species-specific no-work Environmental Sensitive Area buffers would be established until further notice from the biologist. Caltrans will retain a qualified biologist to conduct site visits as needed during construction activities that involve ground disturbance (e.g., vegetation removal, grading, excavation, etc.) within or adjacent to
sensitive habitats.

Cultural:
Based on the cultural resources identification efforts conducted for the project, and in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800), the undertaking will result in No Adverse Effect on historic properties.

Cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) were identified and treated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for the purposes of this undertaking. The proposed work will not alter the characteristics that qualify these assumed-eligible historic properties for inclusion in the NRHP, as project activities are confined to areas and methods that avoid direct or indirect effects.

The project is consistent with the provisions of the Caltrans Section 106 Programmatic Agreement; therefore, a finding of No Adverse Effect is appropriate.

Floodplain:
Per the floodplain analysis, dated February 8, 2025, the project does not involve longitudinal encroachment or significant encroachment into the base floodplain. According to the Best Available Maps (BAM), developed by California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the project area is not located within a 100-year floodplain.

Hazardous Waste:
Per the Hazardous Initial Site Assessment, dated September 2, 2025, the potential to encounter contaminated soil on this project is considered minimal. There is potential to encounter non-hazardous concentrations of Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) while working in unpaved areas within project limits. The Caltrans Standard Provisions, 7-10.2K(6)(j)(iii), which pertains to Earth Material Containing Lead, shall be added to the construction contract. A lead compliance plan prepared by a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) is required.

Yellow thermoplastic painted striping is present in the project area. It is assumed to contain high concentrations of lead, however the scope of work does not address if the painted striping will be disturbed. If the scope of work changes and striping will be removed/cold planned along the State Right of Way, contact the District Hazardous Waste Technical Specialist for assistance.

Management and disposal of Treated Wood Waste (TWW) will be required for this project as wooden posts from the previous fence have deteriorated or broken. The Caltrans Standard Special Provision, 14-11.14, which pertains to TWW shall be added to the construction contract.

Noise:
Per the Noise Memo, dated May 14, 2024, the project would not introduce any potential for long-term traffic noise impacts under the requirements for a Type I or Type II traffic noise project under 23 CFR 772. Therefore, the project falls under the category of Type III noise projects. Type III projects do not require noise analysis, so no noise analysis has been conducted; however, during construction, the project would comply with Caltrans Standard Specification section 14-8.02 “Noise control” regarding construction noise.

No adverse noise impacts from construction are anticipated because construction would be conducted in a rural setting and in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02. Furthermore, implementing the following measures would minimize the temporary noise impacts from construction:

• Do not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

• Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

Paleontology:
Per the Paleontological Identification Report, dated September 2, 2025, paleontological mitigation is not recommended at present. If unanticipated fossil discovery occurs during construction, Specification 14-7.03 of the 2018 Standard Specifications identifies the procedures required to protect the resource. Add the potential discovery of fossils

during construction to the project Risk Register as impacts to time, schedule, and cost. Given the current project description, the risk should be categorized as very low.

Water:
Per the Water Compliance Memo, dated November 27, 2024, the Minor-A project is not expected to result in long-term water quality impacts on nearby surface water and groundwater. Short-term potential impacts to a nearby surface and groundwater could occur due to accidental spills or poor management of handling hazardous materials, fuels, and other potential chemicals used during construction activities.

These activities should be anticipated and addressed in the Design and Construction phase of the project. To eliminate or minimize any potential impacts on the environment, appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be selected and implemented per the Project Planning and Design Guide. As required in Caltrans Standard Specification Section 13-1, the contractor must abide by the BMPs at a minimum and address all potential water quality impacts that may occur when performing construction activities.

If the potential water quality impacts are correctly identified and mitigated through BMPs, then the potential for adverse effects on surface or groundwater quality would be eliminated.

If the project disturbs one acre or more of soil, the following requirements would be required:

- Notification of Intent (NOI) is to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days before the start of construction.

- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the Resident Engineer.

- A Notice of Termination (NOT) shall be submitted to the Regional Board upon completion of construction and site stabilization. A project will be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.

Visual:
Per the Visual Impact Assessment, dated July 02, 2025, there are no visual resource related regulatory requirements for the proposed project. No further visual analysis will be required.

Community Impacts:
Per the Community Impacts Memo dated April 2, 2026, the project will not result in significant impacts to the surrounding communities of Woodford and Markleeville in Alpine County.

Climate Change Assessment for CEQA

Per the Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Report, dated May 27, 2025, the purpose of the proposed project is to remove and replace existing, deteriorated fencing along State Route (SR) 89 in Alpine County. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on SR 89, there will be no increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). While some GHG emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, no increase in operational GHG emissions is expected.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Section 7-1.02A and 7 1.02C, Emissions Reduction, requires contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all ARB emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce GHG emissions.

The following additional measures will be implemented in the project to reduce GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

- Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- Use alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment.

Cumulative Impacts for CEQA

Per the Cumulative Impacts Assessment Memo, dated April 2, 2026, the project will not result in cumulative impacts to any natural resources

Section 4(f) Resources

Pursuant to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (23 U.S.C. §138; 23 CFR Part 774), an evaluation was conducted to determine whether the project would use any publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or historic properties of national, state, or local significance.

Based on the Section 4(f) Evaluation Memo dated April 2, 2026, the project would not result in a use of any Section 4(f)-protected property. Specifically, the project would not:

- Permanently incorporate land from a Section 4(f) property;
- Require temporary occupancy of land that would constitute a use as defined in 23 CFR 774.13(d);
- Result in constructive use of a Section 4(f) property (23 CFR 774.15), as the project would not substantially impair the activities, features, or attributes that qualify a property for protection; or
- Introduce proximity impacts (e.g., noise, visual, or access changes) that would diminish the integrity or function of a protected resource.

All work would occur within existing State right of way and would not affect any identified or eligible Section 4(f) resources.

Therefore, the project results in a No Use determination pursuant to 23 CFR Part 774, and no further Section 4(f) evaluation is required.