APPENDIX E

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121 Sacramento, CA 95814 ☒ County Clerk County of Butte 155 Nelson Avenue Oroville, CA 95965	**From (Public Agency): California Construction Authority** *(acting as CEQA lead agency on behalf of the 3rd District Agricultural Association)* *(Address)* 1776 Tribute Road, Suite 220 Sacramento, CA 95815 Contact: Stewart Deluz, Program Manager Phone: (916) 263-6180 Email: sdeluz@ccauthority.org

Project Title: Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project

Project Location - Specific: Silver Dollar Fairgrounds, 2357 Fair Street, Chico, CA 95928. State-owned parcels: APN 005-500-001 (25.500 ac), APN 005-490-014 (26.700 ac), and APN 005-490-062 (13.770 ac), totaling 65.97 acres. Cross streets: Fair Street and East Park Avenue. Nearest state highway: CA-99.

Project Location - City: Chico **Project Location - County:** Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The 3rd District Agricultural Association (3rd DAA) / Silver Dollar Fairgrounds proposes to construct the Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project on the existing fairgrounds campus in Chico, Butte County. The Project consists of nature-based cooling and community-serving improvements within the developed fairgrounds footprint, including: (a) expanded tree canopy through planting of native and climate-adapted shade trees; (b) shade structures and shade sails over pedestrian gathering areas and livestock-adjacent circulation zones; (c) a Tribal Outdoor Learning Area developed in consultation with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria and other California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission; (d) drinking-water hydration stations, misters, and passive cooling elements; and (e) four bioretention rain gardens and permeable-paving improvements that capture Little Chico Creek watershed runoff.

Purpose. The Project reduces extreme-heat vulnerability at the fairgrounds, expands urban tree canopy in a community identified as vulnerable to climate hazards, integrates tribal cultural and educational programming into the site's normal operations, and strengthens the fairgrounds' capacity to serve as a public gathering venue and emergency response hub for Butte County. The Project is sited entirely within the existing developed footprint and does not expand the operational envelope of the facility.

Beneficiaries. Residents of the City of Chico and Butte County, including populations identified as vulnerable to extreme-heat and climate hazards; fairgrounds visitors and event attendees; California Native American tribes participating in the Tribal Outdoor Learning Area; and first responders and displaced residents using the fairgrounds as an emergency response and resiliency site.

Project footprint note. This Notice of Exemption addresses the three State-owned parcels only (APNs 005-500-001, 005-490-014, and 005-490-062). Two additional parcels within the broader Cool Commons site (APN 005-490-042 and APN 005-560-032) are held by parties other than the State of California and are addressed separately through landowner site-control letters and, if required, supplemental environmental documentation prior to any physical work on those parcels.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

California Construction Authority, acting as CEQA lead agency on behalf of the 3rd District Agricultural Association, consistent with the California Construction Authority's established role as CEQA lead agency for construction projects at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds (see Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Resiliency Center, State Clearinghouse Number 2025090348, filed September 9, 2025).

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

California Construction Authority, on behalf of the 3rd District Agricultural Association / Silver Dollar Fairgrounds.

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: **Class 23 — Normal Operations of Existing Facilities (14 CCR § 15323). Alternate: Class 1 (14 CCR § 15301); Class 4 (14 CCR § 15304); Class 11 (14 CCR § 15311).**
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:

A. Class 23 Categorical Exemption — Normal Operations of Existing Facilities.

CEQA Guidelines section 15323 exempts the normal operations of existing facilities for public gatherings for which the facilities were designed, where there is a past history of the facility being used for the same or similar kind of purpose. Facilities listed within Class 23 include racetracks, stadiums, convention centers, auditoriums, and amphitheaters. The Silver Dollar Fairgrounds has operated continuously as a public gathering facility for the annual Silver Dollar Fair, Junior Livestock Show, Silver Dollar Speedway racing events, community fairs, exhibitions, and public assemblies for well in excess of the three-year threshold, and the future occurrence of these activities is not expected to change. The Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project supports these normal operations by providing shade, tree canopy, hydration, and outdoor learning improvements that serve the existing designed use of the facility. The Project does not expand the operational envelope, increase attendance capacity, or introduce a new use inconsistent with the fairgrounds' historic public-gathering purpose.

Two authorities directly support the Class 23 pathway. (i) The California Construction Authority, acting as CEQA lead agency for the 3rd DAA on this same site, previously determined that construction of the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Resiliency Center — a 41,806-square-foot event center on APN 005-490-014 — is categorically exempt under Class 23 (14 CCR § 15323). That determination was filed with the State Clearinghouse on September 9, 2025 as SCH No. 2025090348 and remains on record. The Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project involves substantially less physical disturbance and shares the same lead agency, the same site, and the same normal-operations character. (ii) Class 23's application to Third District Agricultural Association operations at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds was affirmed by the California Court of Appeal in Campbell v. Third District Agricultural Assn. (1987) 195 Cal.App.3d 115, which held that racing and public-gathering activities at the fairgrounds qualify as normal operations of existing facilities under Class 23 and are exempt from CEQA review.

B. Alternate Categorical Exemptions — Classes 1, 4, and 11.

In the alternative, the Project qualifies under Class 1 (14 CCR § 15301), which exempts minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities, and topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use; under Class 4 (14 CCR § 15304), which exempts minor public alterations in the condition of land and vegetation that do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and which expressly includes new gardening or landscaping (§ 15304(b)); and under Class 11 (14 CCR § 15311), which exempts placement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities, including small structures supporting the existing use.

C. Exception Analysis (14 CCR § 15300.2).

None of the exceptions to categorical exemptions set forth in 14 CCR § 15300.2 applies. Location: the fairgrounds is a fully developed urban campus within the City of Chico; no portion of the Project is located on a list of hazardous waste and substances sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5. Cumulative Impact: the Project, considered together with successive projects of the same type at the fairgrounds, does not produce a cumulatively significant impact; the Project adds nature-based cooling and vegetative improvements that reduce, rather than intensify, environmental burden at the site. Significant Effect: no unusual circumstances distinguish the Project from other projects in the Class 23, 1, 4, or 11 categories such as would create a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment. Scenic Highways: the Project does not damage scenic resources within an officially designated state scenic highway; State Route 99 in this vicinity is not designated a state scenic highway. Historic Resources: the Project does not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource; the improvements are additive landscape and shade features that do not alter character-defining features of any fairgrounds structure.

D. Voluntary Tribal Consultation.

Public Resources Code § 21080.3.1 tribal-consultation requirements apply prior to the adoption of a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report, and are not triggered by a Notice of Exemption. The 3rd DAA has nonetheless voluntarily engaged in tribal outreach, has requested the Native American Heritage Commission tribal contact list for the project area, and has initiated consultation with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria and additional tribes identified by NAHC regarding the Tribal Outdoor Learning Area and any cultural resources concerns. Documentation of tribal outreach is available upon request.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Stewart Deluz, Program Manager, California Construction Authority

Area Code / Telephone / Extension: (916) 263-6180

Email: sdeluz@ccauthority.org

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding: Included as attachment — Notice of Exemption Determination executed by the California Construction Authority as CEQA lead agency for the 3rd District Agricultural Association.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Reference: California Construction Authority Notice of Exemption for the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Resiliency Center, State Clearinghouse No. 2025090348, filed September 9, 2025 (same lead agency, same site, same Class 23 categorical exemption pathway).

Signature:

Stewart Deluz, Program Manager **California Construction Authority**	**Date**	**Title: Program Manager**

☒ Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: _____

☒ Signed by Applicant

	8/14/2026	CEO
Jeremi deOsio, Chief Executive Officer	**Date**	**Title: CEO**

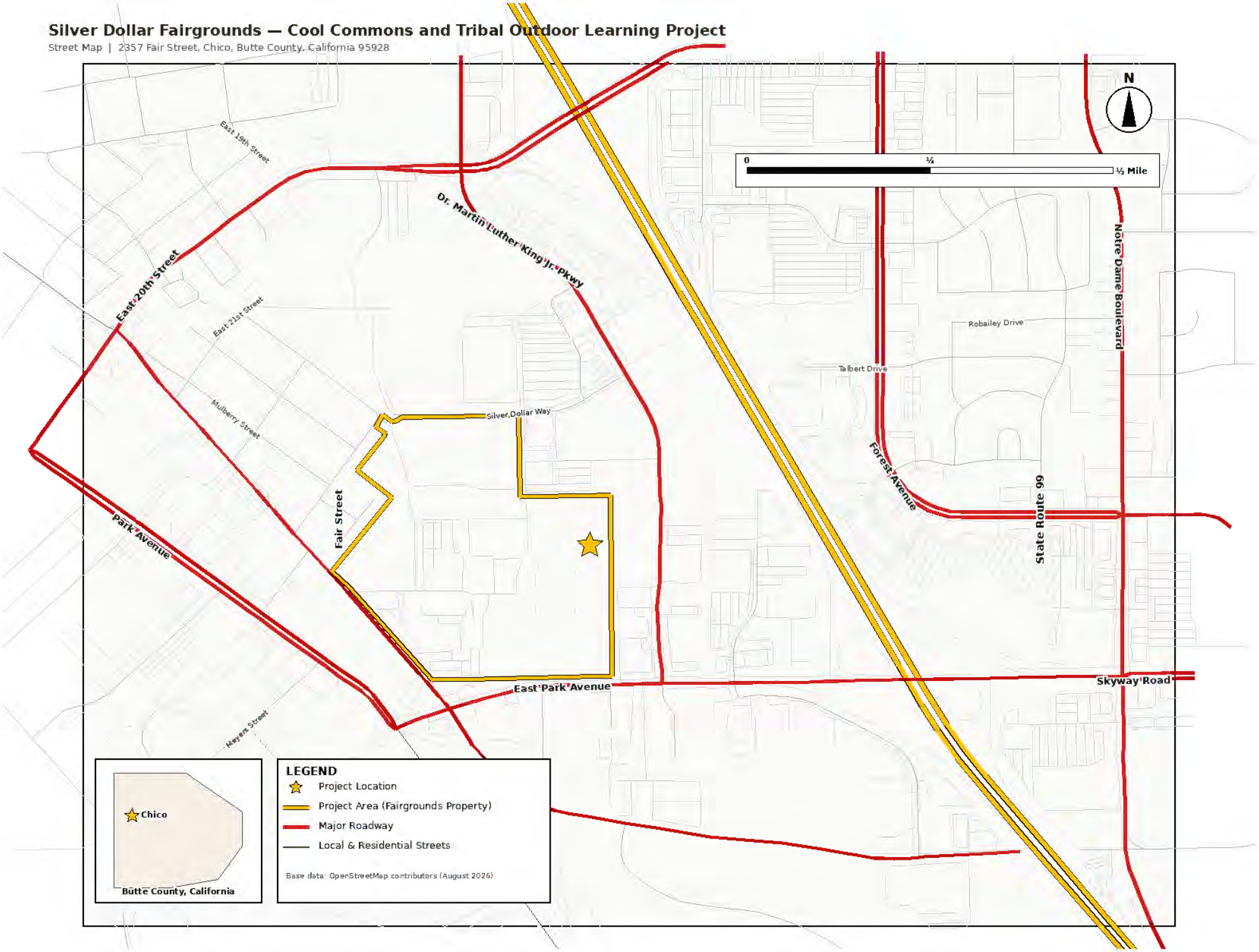
3rd District Agricultural Association / Silver Dollar Fairgrounds

Filing: Butte County Clerk-Recorder, 155 Nelson Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965 (with applicable filing fee and Department of Fish and Wildlife No Effect Determination or CEQA filing fee per Fish and Game Code § 711.4) and State Clearinghouse, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Association of Environmental Professionals 2016 CEQA Guidelines Appendices, Appendix E — Notice of Exemption. Revised 2005 template.

Silver Dollar Fairgrounds — Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project

Street Map | 2357 Fair Street, Chico, Butte County, California 95928



Silver Dollar Fairgrounds — Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project | Location Map

2357 Fair Street, Chico, Butte County, California 95928 | APNs 005-500-001, 005-490-014, 005-490-042, 005-490-062, 005-560-032

0 500 1,000 Feet

N

3rd District Agricultural Association

Silver Dollar Fairgrounds | Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project

2357 Fair Street, Chico, California 95928

Base imagery: Google Earth Pro (June 2023). Property perimeter measured 2,446.57 m / 70.75 ac. City-context inset: Esri World Imagery with City of Chico municipal boundary (OpenStreetMap). Street names: OpenStreetMap. Prepared August 11, 2026.

3rd DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

Silver Dollar Fairgrounds

2357 Fair Street | Chico, California 95928

Phone: (530) 895-4666 | Email: ceo@silverdollarfair.org

August 13, 2026

Stewart Deluz
Program Manager
California Construction Authority
1776 Tribute Road, Suite 220
Sacramento, CA 95815

Re: Authorization for California Construction Authority to Prepare, Execute, and File a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project — Chico, Butte County (APNs 005-500-001, 005-490-014, and 005-490-062)

Dear Mr. Deluz:

The 3rd District Agricultural Association (3rd DAA), a State institution under the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is preparing a Full Proposal application to the California Natural Resources Agency Urban Greening Grant Program for the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project. This Project is located on State-owned parcels at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds, 2357 Fair Street, Chico, California, comprising APN 005-500-001 (25.500 acres), APN 005-490-014 (26.700 acres), and APN 005-490-062 (13.770 acres), for a total of 65.97 acres.

The Urban Greening Grant Program requires that a project's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance be documented at the Full Proposal stage. Consistent with the California Construction Authority's established role as CEQA lead agency for construction projects at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds — including the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Resiliency Center (State Clearinghouse Number 2025090348, filed September 9, 2025) — the 3rd DAA hereby authorizes the California Construction Authority (CCA) to act as CEQA lead agency for the Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project and to take the following actions on the 3rd DAA's behalf:

- Review and finalize the draft Notice of Exemption prepared for the Project (CEQA Guidelines Appendix E format), including the Class 23 Categorical Exemption determination (14 CCR § 15323) and the alternate Class 1, Class 4, and Class 11 determinations set forth therein.
- Execute the Notice of Exemption as the lead agency representative on behalf of the California Construction Authority.
- File the executed Notice of Exemption with the Butte County Clerk-Recorder (155 Nelson Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965), together with the applicable Department of Fish and Wildlife filing fee or

executed No Effect Determination under Fish and Game Code § 711.4, and post the Notice for the 30-day statute-of-limitations period established by Public Resources Code § 21167(d).

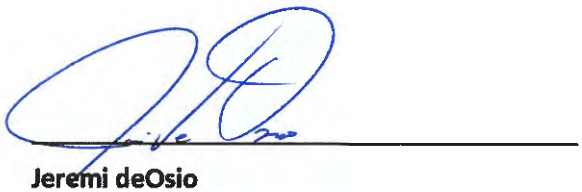
- File the executed Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse at the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly Office of Planning and Research), 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Provide the 3rd DAA with a stamped, filed copy of the Notice of Exemption and the associated County Clerk receipt for inclusion in the Full Proposal application package.

This authorization is limited to CEQA compliance activities for the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project on the three State-owned parcels identified above. Two additional parcels within the broader Cool Commons project footprint (APN 005-490-042 and APN 005-560-032) are held by parties other than the State of California and will be addressed separately through landowner site-control agreements and, if required, supplemental environmental documentation prior to any physical work on those parcels.

The 3rd DAA concurs in the Notice of Exemption determination as drafted and will countersign the applicant-concurrence signature block on the Notice of Exemption form. Please coordinate final signature routing and filing timing with the 3rd DAA's CEO office.

Thank you for the California Construction Authority's continued support of the 3rd DAA and the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds. If you have any questions regarding this authorization or need additional documentation, please contact me directly at (530) 895-4666 or ceo@silverdollarfair.org.

Sincerely,



Jeremi deOsio
Chief Executive Officer
3rd District Agricultural Association / Silver Dollar Fairgrounds

Enclosures:

- Draft Notice of Exemption — CEQA Guidelines Appendix E (Silver Dollar Fairgrounds Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife Form DFW 7535a — Cash Receipt / No Effect Determination request
- Butte County Clerk Notice of Exemption cover form

cc:

- Tina Wynegar, Wyn Partners (grant strategy consultant)
- File — 3rd DAA CEQA compliance record, Cool Commons and Tribal Outdoor Learning Project