

County of Riverside
Facilities Management-PMO
3450 14th Street, Riverside, CA

FOR COUNTY CLERK USE ONLY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

August 5, 2026

Project Name: Approval of Resolution 2026-165 - Authorization to Apply for Grants Funds through the Urban Greening Program at the Indio Fairgrounds Facility, Indio

Project Number: MT31125

Project Location: 46-350 Arabia Street, south of Highway 111, Indio, California 92201, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 614-040-002

Description of Project: In 2024, California voters approved Climate Bond Act, which will invest \$10 billion in local projects that strengthen communities -- protecting drinking water, reducing wildfire and flood risks, restoring natural places, supporting healthy working lands, and expanding access to parks and outdoor spaces. Approximately \$100 million has been allocated for Urban Greening Grants. Funding will be awarded in two competitive cycles, with \$46,125,000 available for the first round commencing in 2026.

Urban Greening projects use nature-based solutions—planting trees that provide strategic shade, expanding green spaces that serve as places of refuge during heat waves, and creating green streets and alleyways that capture and clean stormwater—to help communities become more climate resilient. The Urban Greening Grant Program will fund projects using nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change impacts such as the urban heat island effect, rising temperatures, and extreme heat. Grant funding priorities have been established and used as screening criteria for award. Projects providing meaningful benefits to vulnerable populations, disadvantaged communities and have the potential to successfully mitigate extreme heat are then invited to submit full proposals. The Department of Facilities Management submitted a concept proposal requesting \$1,500,000 for urban greening enhancements to the Indio Fairgrounds. The proposal has advanced through the screening process and the County has been invited to submit a full proposal for consideration of grant funds. Projects that include local funding are awarded additional points through the competitive evaluation process, so the County is proposing a ten percent contribution of \$166,667 to the enhancements for a total project cost of \$1,666,667. As part of the proposal requirements, the Board is required to adopt Resolution 2026-165 which certifies that the County understands the assurances and certification in the application, certifies that the applicant or title holder will have sufficient funds to develop, operate and maintain the project consistent with the land tenure requirements; or will secure the resources to do so, and certifies that it will comply with the prevailing wage provisions of the California Labor Code. The approval of the resolution to apply for grant funds is defined as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is the approval to apply for grant funds through the Urban Greening Program; no expansion of an existing facility or change in land use will occur. No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Riverside County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Facilities Management

Exempt Status: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities Exemption; Section 15061(b) (3), "Common Sense" Exemption. Codified under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Article 5, Section 15061.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of the categorical exemption as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The project will not cause an impact to an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern nor would the project involve unusual circumstances that could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. The project would not result in impacts to scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, historic resources, or other sensitive natural environments, or have a cumulative effect to the environment. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to occur with the approval to apply for grant funds through the Urban Greening Program.

- **Section 15301 – Class 1 Existing Facilities Exemption:** This categorical exemption includes the operation, repair, maintenance, leasing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities, provided the exemption only involves negligible or no expansion of the previous site's use. The Project, as proposed, is limited to approval to apply for grant funds that would result urban greening improvements at the Indio Fairgrounds, an existing facility. The greening improvements would be minor improvements to the existing landscaping, recreational amenities, and drainage and would not require any expansion of public services and facilities; therefore, the project is exempt as the project meets the scope and intent of the Class 1 Exemption identified in Section 15301, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Section 15061 (b) (3) – “Common Sense” Exemption:** In accordance with CEQA, the use of the Common Sense Exemption is based on the “general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) (3). The use of this exemption is appropriate if “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.” *Ibid*. This determination is an issue of fact and if sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity cannot have a significant effect on the environment, then the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68. The ruling in this case stated that if a project falls within a category exempt by administrative regulation or 'it can be seen with certainty that the activity in question will not have a significant effect on the environment', no further agency evaluation is required. With certainty, there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The proposed approval to apply for grant funds will not result in any direct or indirect physical environmental impacts. The direct effects from the approval will be administrative in nature and the indirect effects would be limited to minor improvements to landscaping, recreational amenities, and drainage at the existing facility. Therefore, in no way, would the project as proposed have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact and the project is exempt from further CEQA analysis.

Therefore, the County of Riverside Facilities Management hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the project as proposed is exempt under CEQA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.

Signed:  _____ **Date:** 8-5-2026
Mike Sullivan, Senior Environmental Planner
County of Riverside, Facilities Management