

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Caltrans District 10
1976 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Stockton, CA 95205

Project Title: Interstate 5 Middle Mile Broadband Network Project 10-25-X-XX-0172

Project Location - Specific: Interstate 5 from Post Mile 39.752 to Post Mile 49.819

Project Location - County: San Joaquin

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

Arcadian, in coordination with the California Department of Technology and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to install underground broadband infrastructure, consisting of conduit, fiber optic cable, vaults, and markers on Interstate 5 (I-5) between post mile (PM) 39.572 and PM 49.819 in San Joaquin County

Purpose: This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project will install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System (SHS) necessary to connect to a third-party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which will bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions. Need: In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring high-speed broadband service to all Californians.

The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband Internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Dept. of Transportation, Caltrans

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: _____
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: PRC 21080.51

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project is a linear broadband deployment in the Caltrans right-of-way or right of way of a public road that meets all conditions of Section 21080.51, and the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA. Environmental specialist reviews have occurred, and this project would not cause a significant impact to the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Jonathan Coley

Phone number: 209-479-4083

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature:  Date: 9/2/26 Title: Branch Chief

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.