



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Southbound Eureka Slough Bridge Emergency Repair Project (California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081(b)-2026-047-01)

Project Location (Humboldt): The Southbound Eureka Slough Bridge Emergency Repair Project (Project) is located within the City of Eureka, Humboldt County (See Figure 1). The Project is located at the U.S. Highway 101 southbound bridge over Eureka Slough at approximately 40.805377, -124.141053.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081(b)-2026-047-01 authorizing the California Department of Transportation, District 1 (Caltrans) to incidentally take Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and Longfin Smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*) which are listed as threatened species under CESA, respectively (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(2)(D) and (b)(2)(E), respectively).

The ITP authorizes take of Coho Salmon and Longfin Smelt for activities associated with the Project which are necessary to facilitate an emergency repair of the Southbound Eureka Slough Bridge. Caltrans states parts of the bridge footings have failed, compromising the foundation of the bridge. A Bridge Record of Critical Finding has been issued by Caltrans as a response to the condition of the bridge. Caltrans states these findings present a sudden, unexpected discovery, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to life, health, property, and essential public

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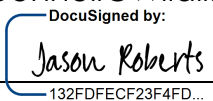
services. Given the extent of damage to the foundation of the bridge, Caltrans states immediate action is required. To facilitate this emergency repair, a work trestle and (if needed) a temporary detour bridge will be constructed just north of the SB Eureka Slough Bridge. This work trestle will span the full length of the slough, parallel to the bridge, to allow for potential repairs and/or installation of a temporary detour bridge, pending further investigation. The Project will include impact pile driving, which would result in take of listed species. Caltrans states the proposed solution is the minimum scope necessary to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, and essential services while also considering the most minimal environmental impacts practicable. On June 17, 2026, Caltrans filed a California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption for this emergency Project (State Clearing House Number 2026060768).

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation, District 1, represented by Steve Croteau, 1656 Union Street, Eureka, California 95501

Exempt Status: On June 17, 2026, the California Department of Transportation, District 1, the Lead Agency, determined that the Project is statutorily exempt pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269(b) (State Clearing House Number 2026060768). 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: Greg O'Connell, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), Gregory.OConnell@Wildlife.ca.gov

Signature:  Date: 9/18/2026
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Jason Roberts, Regional Manager

Date received for filing at LCI:

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Attachment to Notice of Exemption

**California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081(b)-2026-047-01
California Department of Transportation, District 1 Southbound Eureka Slough Bridge
Emergency Repair Project**

Approval of this Project is subject to the statutory exemption for "Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency" (Emergency Project; Pub. Resources Code, §21080, subd. (b)(4)) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b)) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.). "Emergency" is defined as "A sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services" (Pub. Resources Code, §21060.3).

This Project is in response to an emergency occurring at U.S. Highway 101, Humboldt County, between post miles 79.5 and 80.2 (40.805426, -124.140744), in the City of Eureka, California. On U.S. Highway 101 South Bound (SB) Eureka Slough Bridge (Bridge No. 04-0022L), Caltrans states parts of the bridge footings have failed, compromising the foundation of the bridge. A Bridge Record of Critical Finding has been issued by Caltrans as a response to the condition of the bridge. Caltrans states these findings present a sudden, unexpected discovery, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to life, health, property, and essential public services. Given the extent of damage to the foundation of the bridge, Caltrans states immediate action is required. To facilitate this emergency repair, a work trestle and (if needed) a temporary detour bridge will be constructed just north of the SB Eureka Slough Bridge. This work trestle will span the full length of the slough, parallel to the bridge, to allow for potential repairs and/or installation of a temporary detour bridge, pending further investigation. Caltrans states the proposed solution is the minimum scope necessary to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, and essential services while also considering the most minimal environmental impacts practicable. On June 17, 2026, Caltrans filed a California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption for this emergency Project (State Clearing House Number 2026060768). The work trestle for the emergency Project will be constructed just north of the SB Eureka Slough Bridge, and if possible, repairs will be made to the existing SB Eureka Slough Bridge. If repairs to the existing bridge are not feasible or effective, a temporary detour bridge will be installed.

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The Project will include impact pile driving, which could result in take of listed species. Temporary disturbance areas will be returned to pre-project conditions and allowed to revegetate naturally. The Project is expected to cause the permanent loss of 0.30 acres of habitat for the Covered Species and adjacent habitat, and temporary loss of 0.23 acres of habitat for the Covered Species and adjacent habitat.

Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081(b)-2026-047-01. Measures include: 1) Monthly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; and 4) compensatory mitigation.