State of California
Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation
California Geological Survey

California Environmental Quality Act
Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Conservation
801 K Street, MS 13-35
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact:
michael.mckinney@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: New Installation of Strong Motion Instrumentation Station

Project Applicant: Department of Conservation - California Geological Survey

Project Location: San Mateo County, Belmont, CA, Lat. 37.4607, Long. -122.3434

Project Description: The state-of-the art strong motion recording and telemetry equipment proposed for installation at this station will contribute seismic data critical for understanding earthquakes and for emergency planning, potentially saving thousands of lives and millions of dollars in infrastructure damage during a large earthquake.

The current property owner, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, has worked with the California Geological Survey (CGS) to find a suitable location in an open area with full sun exposure, near the Lat/Lon location noted above. CGS plans to install a small seismic monitoring station by pouring a small concrete pad measuring 4 inches thick by 40 inches long by 40 inches wide that includes three 18-inch post hole pillars. The pillars allow the pad/instrument to move with the soil rather than slide across the ground surface during an earthquake. A seismic instrument (tri-axial accelerometer) with a 36-inch-tall fiberglass (t-hut) or 46-inch-tall stainless steel (Caltrans) protective enclosure will be secured to the concrete pad. Solar panels will be affixed to the top of the fiberglass enclosure. All excavation will be dug by hand or mini-excavator, depending on site accessibility. There are no hazardous substances involved during construction nor as components. If necessary, a small generator will be used to power a hand-loaded concrete mixer and any other tools needed for construction. Construction/installation takes about 3 days.

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CGS has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CGS further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CGS's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Exempt Status: *(Check Applicable)*

☐ **Statutory Exemption(s):**

- ☐ Ongoing Project (PRC § 21169 and 14 CCR § 15261 (b))
- ☐ Ministerial (PRC § 21080 (b)(1) and 14 CCR § 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (PRC § 21080 (b)(3) and 14 CCR § 15269 (a))
- ☐ Emergency Projects (PRC § 21080 (b)(4) and 14 CCR § 15269 (b) or (c))

☑ **Categorial Exemption(s):**

- ☐ Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1)
- ☐ Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (14 CCR § 15302)
- ☑ Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (14 CCR § 15303)
- ☑ Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (14 CCR §§ 15304, 1684.2)
- ☑ Class 6, Information Collection (14 CCR § 15306)
- ☐ Class 11, Accessory Structures (14 CCR § 15311)
- ☐ Class 21, Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit (14 CCR § 15321)
- ☐ Class 30, Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a
- ☐ Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material) (14 CCR § 15330)
- ☐ Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects (14 CCR § 15333)

☐ **General Exemption:** (14 CCR §§ 1501 (b)(3))

☐ **Not a "Project" subject to CEQA:** (14 CCR §§ 15378 (b) (2))

This project is exempt as described above as new construction of a small weatherproof enclosure (Class 3) to house sensor equipment that collects seismic data (Class 6). The project is a minor alteration in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation that does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees (Class 4). Further, the project will not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, and none of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials can be made available to the public by contacting the California Geological Survey, located at 801 K Street, MS 13-35, Sacramento, CA 95814; by calling (916) 879-3301; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting michael.mckinney@conservation.ca.gov. The notice filed with the State Clearinghouse may be accessed online at: https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov.

Certified: DocuSigned by: Michael McKinney 3182E50F41434BA... **Date:** 10/6/2026

Department of Conservation,
California Geological Survey

Project Overview

CSMIP station 58373 Upper Crystal Springs Res. – Skyline[A10] was installed back in 1978 with the permission of the previous property owner. Over the past decade the Armco structure and attached solar panels have been completely shaded by adjacent tree growth which has resulted in the instrument being drained of power and now non-operational. To remedy this issue, we are proposing the relocation of the instrument to a more open area on the property with full sun exposure. Currently the property is owned and operated by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission who has agreed to work with CSMIP to find a suitable location, however SFPUC requires this request to flow through a Project Review process. This process requires review of CEQA and written justification for why this project is exempt from any formal CEQA review. Below are the sections within CEQA that have been deemed likely appropriate to justify exemption.

The work to be performed on-site will be pouring of a small 40” wide x 40” wide x 4” thick concrete pad that includes three 18” post hole pillars. The pillars allow for the pad/instrument to move with the soil rather than slide across the ground surface in the event of an earthquake. A specification sheet for the installation of the concrete pad is attached to this document. The seismic instrument (tri-axial accelerometer) and fiberglass protective enclosure will be secured to the concrete pad. Solar panels will also be affixed to the top of the fiberglass enclosure.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires environmental review for discretionary projects that may have a significant effect on the environment. However, certain activities are categorically exempt if they fall within classes of projects determined by the Secretary for Natural Resources to generally have no significant environmental impact. The proposed activity—pouring a small 40-inch by 40-inch concrete slab on a bare hillside—qualifies for categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 (Class 6), assuming standard conditions are met, and thus does not violate CEQA guidelines by requiring further environmental documentation.

15306. INFORMATION COLLECTION

Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Note: *Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code; Reference: Section 21084, Public Resources Code.*

CSMIP 58373 - Current Location
37.4615, -122.3434
N
New Location
37.4607, -122.3434
Skyline Rd

Current location – no sun exposure for solar panel

New location – full sun exposure

Free Field – T-hut Installation Details

These photos are of a typical Ground Station installation. The conduits for the 120-volt AC power and telephone line can either come up beside the pad (on a side without a door) or can come up through the concrete pad in the very corner of the cabinet. The white PVC caps on the top of the cabinet house the antennas for the GPS timing and the spread spectrum radio communications.

Free Field – T-hut Installation Details

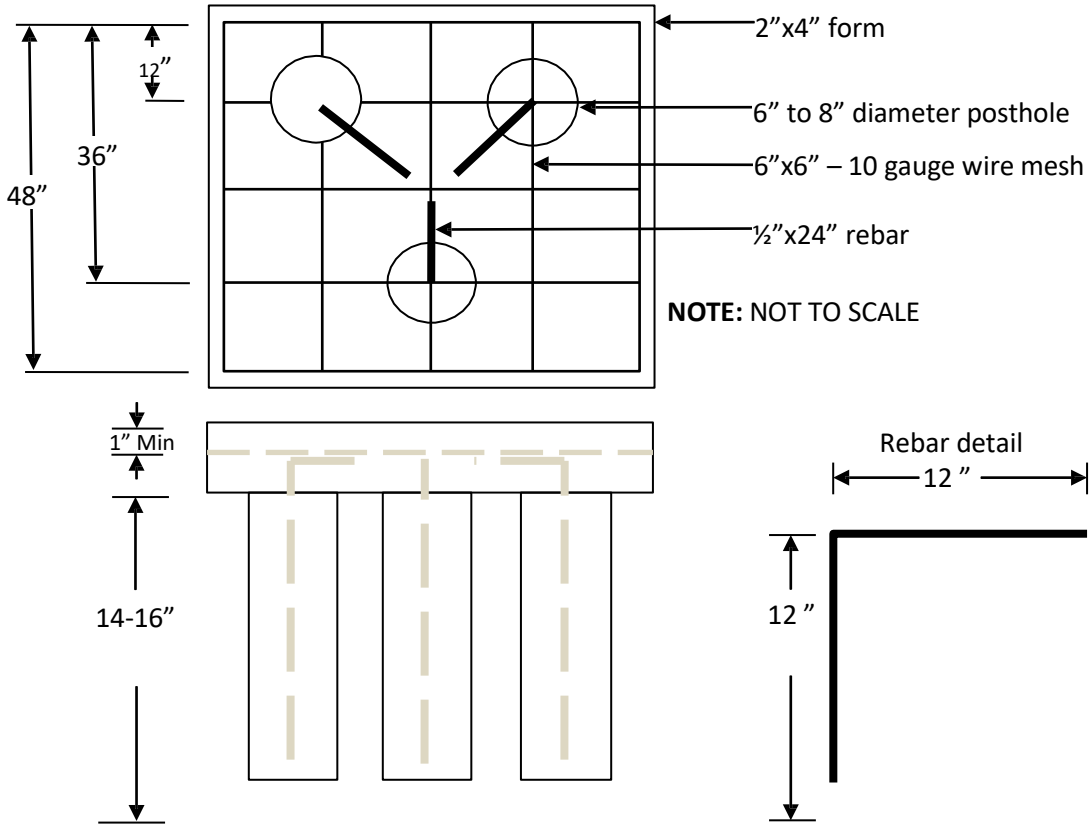
Photos above shows the construction of the concrete base pad for fiberglass T-hut enclosure with three 18" deep base anchors

Photo above shows finished 4' x 4' concrete pad for T-Hut Enclosure

Free Field – T-hut Installation Details

FREEFIELD CONCRETE PAD CONSTRUCTION

1. Dig out a square area in the ground that is approximately 48”L X 48”W X 2”D. Note: The sides of the area should be oriented to True (not magnetic) north – south and east – west, within ± 1 degree.
2. Using 2” X 4” wood material, construct a form whose inside dimension is 46”L X 46”W X 4”D (see drawings below).
3. Place the form in the square dugout area and use stakes to secure and level the form so that the top of the form is approximately 1 ½” above grade.
4. Near two corners on one side of the form, dig two postholes (6 to 8 inch diameter) that are 14 to 16 inches deep. Center another hole on the opposite side of the form. These are typically dug with a hand posthole digger.
5. Place ½” (#4) X 24” rebar that has been bent at 90 degrees inside the postholes (see detail). Place wire mesh (6” X 6” - 10 gauge wire) a minimum 1 inch below the top of the form and 1 inch above ground level and wire-tie the rebar to the wire mesh.
6. Approximately .15 cubic yard of concrete is required to fill the postholes and form (approx. 7 to 9 - 60 lb. bags). The concrete requirement is a six sack mix with ¾ inch maximum aggregate.



Unless otherwise specified	Drawn By	CP	12/03/10	California Department of Conservation California Geological Survey, Office of Strong Motion Studies 801 K Street Sacramento, CA
Dimensions are in inches	Checker	SF	12/3/10	48” X 48” CONCRETE PAD CONSTRUCTION WITH WIRE MESH
TOLERANCES	Designer			
Fract .XX .XXX ANGLES ±0°30'	Opr Mgr			
Mat'l				SIZE
Finish				SCALE SHEET OF