**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**
**DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)**

**Project Information**

**Project Name (if applicable):** I-5 Hillside Stabilization

**DIST-CO-RTE:** 07-LA-5 **PM/PM:** R63.96R/R64.16R

**EA:** 50100 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** EFIS: 0724000131

**CE Log #** 202605011

**Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to install a rockfall protection and mitigation system along northbound (NB) Interstate 5 (I-5) within the Caltrans right-of-way, along with the partial acquisition and temporary use of private parcel for the installation of rockfall protection and mitigation system. The rockfall protection and mitigation system along NB I-5 at post mile (PM) R63.96R to R64.16R, spans a length of 0.20 miles in Los Angeles County. Description continued on continuation sheets.

**Caltrans CEQA Determination** (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class** 1. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

☐ No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.

☐ **Covered by the Common Sense Exemption**. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

**Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief**

| Susan Tse Koo | Susan Tse Koo | 10/06/2026 |
|---|---|---|
| Print Name | Signature | Date |

**Project Manager**

| Allen Shim | | 10/06/2026 |
|---|---|---|
| Print Name | Signature | Date |

**Caltrans NEPA Determination** (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

☒ **23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☒ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)8)**
- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**
- ☐ **Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

**Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief**

| Susan Tse Koo | Susan Tse Koo | 10/06/2026 |
|---|---|---|
| Print Name | Signature | Date |

**Project Manager/ DLA Engineer**

| Allen Shim | | 10/06/2026 |
|---|---|---|
| Print Name | Signature | Date |

**Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable):** N/A
**Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent:** 7/21/2026

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

**Continuation sheet:**

Project Description Cont.:

Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed project is to implement comprehensive and permanent slope stabilization measures to mitigate and repair the storm-related slope damage, enhance roadway safety, and maintain reliable operations along this segment of I-5.

Need:

The slope within the project area has become unstable due to previous severe storm events, resulting in rockfall and debris accumulation on the highway shoulder and travel lanes. These conditions pose safety risks to motorists, disrupt highway operations, and require increased maintenance efforts. If not addressed, the slope is likely to continue deteriorating, further increasing risks to traveling public and long-term maintenance demands.

It is estimated the slope repair will cover approximately 6.43 acres (280,000 square feet). Project components include the removal of existing, temporary K-rail installed during storm emergencies, rock fall protection measures and/or mitigation systems (mesh/cable nets), and sign re-location. The project will also include drainage improvements at the toe of the slope to collect and convey runoff toward the existing discharge point. The proposed drainage improvements include construction of a concrete-lined V-ditch at the toe of the slope to provide positive drainage to the existing 24-inch corrugated metal pipe (CMP) beneath the emergency access road. No public utilities will be relocated. New right-of-way (6.43 acres) will be acquired and a temporary construction easement (TCE) totaling (4.9 acres) consisting of access road easement for the project. All work, including staging, will be performed in Los Angeles County within the existing Caltrans right-of-way, the new acquired right-of-way and TCE.

Environmental Commitments:

Air Quality

- Construction of the proposed project shall comply with all applicable AQMD rules. While construction equipment on site would generate some objectionable odors primarily arising from diesel exhaust, these emissions would generally be limited to the project site and would be temporary in nature. Objectionable odor should also be minimized by conducting certain construction activities in areas at least 500 feet from the sensitive receptors as feasible.
- The AQB will coordinate for review and approval of a nonstandard special provision (nSSP) 14-9.05 to mandate contractors' compliance with all applicable air district rules including measures related to dust control.

Biological Resources

- The resident engineer, contractor, and biologist will coordinate to minimize the disturbance area to the maximum extent feasible. If any species of concern are observed and identified during construction activities, all work shall immediately cease, and the District Biologist shall be immediately notified. Work shall not resume until clearance is given by the District Biologist.
- Caltrans Environmental Division will review the plans, specifications, and estimates to ensure that the final project scope and design are consistent with the NESMI.
- If the scope or impact area should change for any reason, the Division will be notified to determine whether current environmental documentation is adequate.
- Caltrans Environmental will attend the pre-construction meeting with one week's prior notice to ensure implementation and compliance with the necessary avoidance and minimization measures.
- The project shall implement standard construction BMPs, including erosion control and litter control to prevent unanticipated effects from occurring against special status habitats and other biological resources.
- The Caltrans biologist, Edlyn Nunez (phone: 213-269-1273, email: edlyn.nunez@dot.ca.gov), must be notified two weeks prior to construction, so that preconstruction surveys may be conducted, per the following standard specification: 14-6.03 Bird Protection. The project will avoid affecting nesting birds by scheduling construction outside of the nesting bird season, which is February 1st – September 1st.
- If the project is scheduled during the nesting bird season, then the project will implement Nesting Bird Pre-construction Surveys, to avoid "taking" migratory birds. The nesting bird pre-construction surveys will consist of a qualified biologist performing nesting bird surveys no later than three days before the scheduled initiation of vegetation removal. If active nesting songbirds are observed, then the biologist will establish a no-work buffer around the nest until the fledglings are independent. The typical buffer is 150 feet away for songbirds and other non-raptors and 500 feet for raptors.
- The Contractor shall inspect and clean construction equipment prior to entering work sites located within the project limits. During construction, the contractor shall ensure that all active portions of the construction site are watered a minimum of twice daily or more often when needed due to dry or windy conditions to prevent excessive amounts of dust. During construction, the Contractor shall ensure that all material stockpiled is sufficiently watered or covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. During construction, soil/gravel/rock will be obtained from weed-free sources. Only certified weed-free straw, mulch, and/or fiber rolls will be used for erosion control. Include SSP 20-1-03C for invasive species onsite.
- Work shall cease when the chance of rain is more than 30% and is forecasted for the future 72 hours.
- All pollution and litter laws and regulations will be followed by all personnel on site.

- Caltrans Division of Landscape Architecture should include plant materials that are useful and provide nectar and shelter for wildlife and other native pollinating insects. Caltrans Biology unit will coordinate with CT Landscape to provide a plant palette of regionally appropriate native species to be hydroseeded within the new rock netting.

Cultural Resources

- If previously unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction, work will be halted in that area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find.

Hazardous Waste

- A project-specific ADL Site Investigation (SI) shall be conducted in the project design phase to adequately evaluate and determine the extent of ADL contamination and to assist the General Contractor in development of a task-specific Lead Compliance Plan (LCP). The SI for the R/W acquisition is needed to determine the existing condition.
- All excess/excavated soil at the unpaved areas shall be classified as a California hazardous waste and shall be disposed of at a permitted Class I hazardous waste disposal facility in the State of California.