Notice of Exemption

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 222
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: University of California, Berkeley
Physical & Environmental Planning
1995 University Avenue, Room 530
Berkeley, California 94704

Project Title: **UC Berkeley California Memorial Stadium Lighting Retrofit Project**
Project Location: Hill Campus West
Project Location: Berkeley, CA
Project Location: Alameda County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project (Project Description): UC Berkeley proposes a lighting retrofit project that will replace the existing high intensity discharge (HID) lighting fixtures and controls within California Memorial Stadium with new energy efficient light emitting diode (LED) light fixtures (see Figure 1 for location map). The existing lighting cabinets will also be replaced. The project would replace all of the existing 1500 and 2000 watt HID fixtures with 1500 watt LED fixtures. The four existing light poles on the east side of the stadium will be used for new LED light fixtures. As part of the upgrade, the existing HID fixtures above the press box will be removed. Because the new LED fixtures and entertainment components require additional horizontal mounting space, 12 mounting structures will be installed 7 feet above the press box roofline to accommodate the equipment. This project will also include color-changing fixtures to support game day and entertainment features. The existing static HID lighting system allows for three lighting levels. The new lighting system would allow for multiple lighting levels and colors, with the ability to change colors and levels of individual lights, enabling the ability to create light shows. While new lights will also be physically fixed in their mounting positions and pole locations and would have variable (adjustable and controllable) operational performance, lights (and lasers) would always be directed onto the field and not the night sky.

The proposed project would involve no expansion of use of existing facilities and would not result in additional use of the stadium or stadium lights, although the new lighting system has the functionality to create light shows that could be employed during existing football games. Among other benefits, the LED lights provide dimming capabilities that will allow the university to reduce the lighting power during evening use when the lights are typically on. Overall, the proposed project would increase the foot candles (the amount of light or brightness of light on the field) by almost 20 percent and provide better uniformity in field coverage over the existing system. However, while the new lighting system is designed to provide improved illumination on the playing surface, the new fixtures are also designed to minimize unwanted light spill and glare in surrounding areas. Modeling for the new lighting system shows that the foot candle measurements at the property line would result in a similar or reduced light impact on surrounding areas in comparison to the existing system. The updated system will also reduce overall energy consumption by an estimated 30 percent as compared with the existing lighting system.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: University of California, Berkeley
Parties Undertaking Project: University of California, Berkeley
Exempt Status:

- ☐ 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: **Class 1 (15301): Existing Facilities; Class 2 (15302): Replacement or Reconstruction; Class 3 (15303): and New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures**
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 20180.35
- ☐ General Exemption (Sec. 15061(b)(3)).

Reason Why Project is Exempt: The project is categorically exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 Existing Facilities, as it involves minor alteration of an existing public facility involving no expansion of existing or former use and would not result in additional use of the stadium or stadium lights. On a separate and independent basis, the project is also categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15302, Class 2 Replacement or Reconstruction, including replacement of lighting fixtures and cabinets. On a separate and independent basis, the project is also categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, Class 3 New Construction, for installation of new fixtures and equipment in small structures. There are no unusual circumstances creating the possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, pursuant to CEQA Section 15300.2.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Raphael Breines, Senior Planner, Physical and Environmental Planning
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (510) 642-6796

Signature:

Wendy Hillis
Title: Campus Architect, Assistant Vice Chancellor

Date: November 24, 2026

☒ Signed by Lead Agency
Date received for filing at OPR:

Figure 1: Location Map

