

## CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:** Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Christopher Schmuckal, Planning and Development

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

**APNs:** 153-270-009

**Case No.:** 20EMP-00000-00001

**Location:** End of Tunnel Road near the Tunnel and Jesusita Trail along Mission Creek

**Project Title:** Jesusita Trail Rockfall Hazard

**Project Applicant:** Southern California Edison (SCE)

**Project Description:** The removal of rocks, boulders, and other loose debris hazards from the access road on the slopes above the Jesusita Trail. This work includes removing rocks and stabilizing the outer edge of the access road above the foot trail to prevent additional material from sliding down the slope towards the hiking trail. This emergency work was completed by February 7, 2020. The project proposes additional work to remove the berm and install approximately 550 ft. of temporary k-rails along three sections of the trail where vertical rock walls were created south of the existing bridge over Mission Creek. A 4 ft. tall temporary chain link fence will be installed on top of the k-rail on the tree sections to prevent debris from falling onto the trail. Additionally the steel plates on the bridge over Mission Creek will be temporarily removed for an assessment of the historical bridge resource. After the assessment is complete the plates will be placed back on the bridge to facilitate future construction. The project will have pedestrian and vehicle safety traffic control to monitor the traffic along the trail. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used in the field as shown in the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan to protect the water quality of Mission Creek. Dust control will be used as necessary and the access road entrance area will be swept to control track out as needed. This project constitutes an emergency because the rocks and other debris are precariously perched above the Jesusita Trail and, if dislodged, could freefall onto the trail and injure a pedestrian. This project is located at the end of Tunnel Road (APN: 153-270-009) on a parcel zoned AG-II-100 in the Mission Canyon Community Plan Area, First Supervisorial District.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of Santa Barbara

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Southern California Edison, Attn: Hazem Gabr

**Exempt Status:**

Ministerial

Statutory Exemption

Categorical Exemption  
 Emergency Project  
 Declared Emergency

**Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section:** Cal. Pub. Res. Code Section 21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(c) [Emergency Projects]

**Reasons to support exemption findings:** CEQA Guidelines Section 15269 (c) exempts *specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency*. In December 2019, Southern California Edison (SCE) conducted various grading activities along the Tunnel Trail and Jesusita Trail near Mission Creek to widen existing access routes, without obtaining appropriate permit authorization. These trails are commonly used by the public for hiking. This work created areas where rocks and loose debris now pose a public safety hazard to trail users. The rocks and debris were precariously placed and, if dislodged, could free fall down onto the trail and harm a pedestrian. Also, an existing rock slope south of the bridge over Mission Creek was cut, creating a vertical rock face where additional rock and debris could fall and injure individuals on the trail. Immediate measures to stabilize the areas and provide safety barriers are necessary for public safety purposes. The clear risk to public safety posed by the rocks and debris constitutes an emergency under CEQA. The Emergency Permit will help keep the public safe by removing rocks that pose an immediate hazard, and installing a k-rail and fence along the vertical rock-wall to keep pedestrians away from this dangerous section of the trail until a long term solution is implemented through the normal permit process. Therefore, this statutory exemption applies to the proposed project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Christopher Schmuckal, Case Planner

**Phone #:** (805) 568-3509

**Department/Division Representative:**  \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** March 24, 2020

**Acceptance Date:** March 24, 2020

**Distribution:** Hearing Support Staff

**Date Filed by County Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_.