

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department of Public Works – Transportation Division
(Lead Department/Division)

Based on a preliminary review of the project the following activity 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.

APN(s): N/A Case No.: 25STM3

LOCATION: Various Supervisorial Districts

PROJECT TITLE: Public Works Director's Report on Emergency Response Actions from 2025/26 Impacts of Flooding and Storms and Continuation of Emergency Actions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project consists of two requests of the Board of Supervisors to 1) Receive and review a report from the Public Works Director regarding emergency actions taken pursuant to Resolution No. 19-327 and Public Contract Code section 22050 related to emergency operations responding to flooding, storms, and debris removal following the recent storm events and the necessity of the action and the reasons the emergency will not permit delay resulting from competitive solicitation of bids. 2) Direct staff to return to the Board every 14 days to allow the Board to review the emergency action and determine whether there is a need to continue the emergency action, by a 4/5 vote, until the actions are terminated.

Disaster response and recovery processes are actively in progress. The timeframe of these operations are direct result of the extent and severity of damage. Multi-jurisdictional collaboration is required at some damage sites, and staff's attention to federal and state procedures and guidelines for threatened and endangered species is mandatory. Environmental staff has initiated federal and state emergency notifications to the respective regulatory agencies. Public Works is planning to continue emergency operations with expedited environmental resource protection, procurement to ensure public safety and access to roadways and prevent further exacerbation of vulnerable locations across the county. This exemption considers all further administrative activities for this project such as Award of Contracts and the Statement of Final Quantities.

EXEMPT STATUS : (Check One)

- Ministerial
- Statutory [Sec. 15269]
- Categorical Exemption [Sec. 15301]
- Emergency Project
- No Possibility of Significant Effect [Sec. 15061(b, 3)]

Cite specific CEQA Guideline Section: 15269. Emergency Projects, (d) Projects undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, or restore an existing highway damaged by fire, flood, storm, earthquake, land subsidence, gradual earth movement, or landslide, provided that the project is initiated within one year of the damage occurring. This exemption does not apply to highways designated as official state scenic highways, nor any project undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to expand or widen a highway damaged by fire, flood, storm, earthquake, land subsidence, gradual earth movement, or landslide. 15301(c) Existing Facilities – Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

Reasons to support exemption findings (attach additional material, if necessary): The exemption from CEQA is granted by the Legislature by Statute as the following emergency projects are exempt from the requirements of CEQA. Projects undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, or restore an existing highway damaged by fire, flood, storm, earthquake, land subsidence, gradual earth movement, or landslide, provided that the project is initiated within one year of the damage occurring. Additionally, the proposed work on existing facilities consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The projects allow for a public safety repair activities designed to maintain a safe traveling condition of the highway facility as it was constructed. Therefore, the projects are contemplated by the CEQA exemption under section 15269 and under section 15301. Further, there are no unusual circumstances which would create a possibility that there would be a significant effect.

There is no substantial evidence that there are unusual circumstances (including future activities) resulting in (or which might reasonably result in) significant impacts which threaten the environment. The exceptions to the categorical exemptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines are:

a. **Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located -- a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 is a Class 1 exemption; therefore, this exception does not apply.

b. **Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

The project involves emergency repairs of existing public roads, related facilities and adjacent right of way. In addition, there are no other identified projects which would contribute to cumulative impacts. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

c. **Significant Effect.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

The project involves emergency repairs and additional maintenance activities on roadways for traffic safety on public roads. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

d. Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

The project does not involve a scenic highway or a project which may result in damage to a scenic resource, removal of live trees, rock outcropping or similar resources.

e. Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

There are no hazardous wastes site locations on public roads. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

f. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

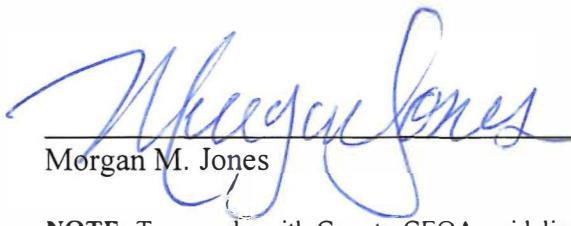
The roadways involved are not identified as a historical resource. In addition, emergency roadway repairs and other maintenance activities would not involve any modifications to historic resources. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Chris Sneddon, Director Public Works Phone: (805) 568-3064

Department Representative: Morgan M. Jones, Engineering Environmental Regulatory Compliance Manager III

Acceptance Date: **January 13, 2026**

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff for posting



Morgan M. Jones

January 7, 2026

Date

NOTE: To comply with County CEQA guidelines a copy must be filed with the County Clerk of the Board after project approval to begin a 35 day statute of limitations on legal challenges.

Distribution:

Date filed with Clerk of Board _____