

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Santa Barbara County Department of Public Works/Flood Control Division

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.

APN(s): 155-170-029 Case No. N/A

**Location:** Santa Monica Debris Basin near Foothill and Santa Monica Roads, Carpinteria CA  
(Include street address and cross street (if urbanized area) or attach specific location map)

**Project Title:** Santa Monica Debris Basin Operational Improvements

**Project Description:** Following the Thomas Fire in December of 2017, a high-intensity rainstorm on January 9, 2018, resulted in a debris flow that filled the Santa Monica Debris Basin to capacity. The ensuing cleanout effort immediately revealed the extreme challenges and limitations, in accessing the site and maintaining the structure. The Santa Monica Debris Basin remains at risk to future debris flows until full recovery of the burned watershed. The objective of the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District is to perform needed maintenance in a much more expeditious manner, thus having the ability to return the basin to full storage capacity between debris flow events that may occur within the same rainfall season.

The specific problems identified are: excessive maintenance due to blockage of the Inlet Towers and the Low Flow Conduit; inadequate maintenance access; and lack of debris placement sites. The primary causes of these problems were related to: the lack of specific design criteria used for modeling debris flows into debris basins; and the lack of emphasis paid to the maintenance infrastructure required to accomplish an expeditious cleanout of the full debris basin.

Remedial measures proposed to prevent these problems include: modification of the Inlet Towers and Access Pad; replacement of the Emergency Spillway Bridge; installation of a Deck Bridge; and reconfiguration of the Plunge Pool Bypass.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Barbara County Flood Control District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Barbara County Flood Control District

**Exempt Status:** (Check one)

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- No Possibility of Significant Effect

**Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section:** 15301 Existing Facilities. CEQA Guideline Section 15301 (d), 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:** Consistent with this exemption, the project is not located in any wetland or an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard. There are no unusual circumstances which would create a possibility that there would be a significant effect. Therefore, this project can be found to be categorically exempt from CEQA.

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) 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 is the repair/minor alteration of an existing facility to facilitate cleanout within the existing structure footprint. There are no other projects proposed in the area, thus this exception does not apply.

**(b) 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 is the repair/minor alteration of an existing facility within the existing basin footprint, and not located in any wetland or an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

**(c) 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 trees, rock outcropping or similar resource. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

**(d) 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 sites within the project site. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Seth Shank Phone #: 805-568-3443

Department/Division Representative: Seth Shank Date: December 17, 2020

Acceptance Date: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTED

DEC 17 2020

SB County

Planning and Development

Note: A copy of this form must be posted at P&D 6 days prior to a decision on the project. Upon project approval, this form must be filed with the County Clerk of the Board and posted by the Clerk of the Board for a period of 30 days to begin a 35 day statute of limitations on legal challenges.

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff  
Project file (when P&D permit is required)

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

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2020 DEC 17 11:36 AM  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS