

**ATTACHMENT 2
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Florence Trotter-Cadena, Planner

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: 145-200-005

Case No.: 16RZN-00000-00002, 14CUP-00000-00016

Location: located approximately ½ mile south of Highway 154 on Forest Route 6N04 at 2680 Highway 154, in the Lake Cachuma area, Third Supervisorial District.

Project Title: Verizon at Rancho Alegre

Project Applicant: Jay Higgins, SAC Wireless

Project Description: Consistency Rezone and New Verizon Telecommunications Facility

Project Description:

The project is a request for a Minor Conditional Use Permit to allow construction and operation of an un-manned telecommunications facility, in compliance with Sections 35.82.060 and 35.44 of the County Land Use and Development Code. A consistency rezone is also required to rezone the property from 100-AG, Agriculture under Ordinance 661 to AG-II-100 under the Land Use and Development Code. The facility would be located within a 900 sq. ft., fenced lease area at 2680 Highway 154.

The proposed new telecommunications facility would include twelve (12) panel antennas (2 per sector). The antennas would be mounted on a new 50 ft. tall antenna support structure designed to resemble a faux eucalyptus tree. The antennas are directional and six would be mounted at a height of 42 feet and six would be mounted at a height of 34'4" feet. A microwave antenna would be mounted at a height of 35 feet. The antennas would be operating in Cellular, Personal Communications System (PCS), and Long Term Evolution (LTE) bandwidths. The proposed facility would provide improved 4G service for the Lake Cachuma area.

All support equipment for the facility would be located within the fenced lease area on a proposed 56 sq. ft. concrete slab which includes: 1) a new electrical pedestal; 2) a telco box; 3) two GPS antennas; 4) two cabinets; 5) a 48 VC power plant; 6) intersect box; 7) a transformer; 8) four raycaps; 9) four service lights; 10) an ice bridge which protects the cables to the tower from inclement weather; 11) a 1,058 feet in length of trenching for the hybrid cables; and, 12) a new

132 diesel gallon emergency generator would temporarily serve the facility in the event of a power failure. The 32kw generator would be located on a separate 72 square foot concrete slab and stored inside the lease area. In the event of an accidental spill, the fuel would be contained within the enclosure on the concrete pad and would not be discharged off site. The lease area will be fenced with chain link fencing. The facility will be accessed by an existing driveway.

The facility would be serviced by Pacific Gas and Electric and Verizon by a connection to existing utilities onsite. The proposed lease area would be secured by an 8 ft. high chain link fence. Access to the site would be provided by an existing 12 foot wide all weather access easement from Highway 154. The project includes minimal grading (287 cubic yards of cut and 287 cubic yards of fill to be balanced onsite) for utility trenching and site preparation. With the exception of a switched tech light, no exterior lighting is proposed.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Barbara County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Jay Higgins, SAC Wireless Services

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- No Possibility of Significant Effect [§15061(b)(3)]

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section: 15061(b)(3) [No Possibility of Significant Effect], 15303 [New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures], and 15304 [Minor Alterations to Land]

Reasons to Support Exemption Findings:

The proposed rezone is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) [No Possibility of Significant Effect]. This section exempts projects under the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. The minimum parcel size and development potential would remain essentially the same under the proposed zone district as there would be no increase in subdivision potential. However, the consistency rezone would allow for the permitting of modern uses not contemplated under Ordinance 661 but desired by the County and the applicant. The parcel is currently developed with the Boy Scout Camp, which was permitted with a conditional use permit. The consistency rezone would not increase the demand on existing services, would not result in the loss of any existing native vegetation, and would not require grading or land alteration, nor would it impact any biological, archaeological or other sensitive environmental resources. Therefore, the common sense exemption (i.e. CEQA Section 15061) is appropriate for this project

The proposed telecommunication project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 [New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures] and Section 15304

[Minor Alterations to Land] of the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 15303 exempts the construction and location of a limited number of new small facilities or structures. Section 15304 exempts minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation that do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes including grading on slopes of less than 10%, landscaping, and minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored. The project consists of the construction and use of a new un-manned telecommunications facility that will be constructed to appear as a faux eucalyptus tree. The project consists of the construction and use of a new un-manned telecommunications facility that will be constructed to appear as a faux eucalyptus tree. The proposed minor trenching for utilities will not require grading or the removal of any healthy, mature, or scenic trees. As such, the project will comply with the limited scope of these Categorical Exemptions.

There is no substantial evidence that proposed project involves 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 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.**

The proposed project would be located outside of sensitive habitat areas. No significant vegetation would be removed to accommodate the project. A Phase I Archaeological Resources Report (EBI, March 18, 2015) was prepared in conformance with the County Cultural Resource Guidelines. An intensive archaeological field survey of the project site was conducted. No pre-historic cultural resources were observed on the project site. There are no known religious, sacred, or educational sites on the subject parcel. There are no known landslides, expansive soils, or other hazardous resources on the project site. Therefore, this exception to the categorical exemption 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 is for an unmanned telecommunications facility within an approximately 900 square foot lease area on a 138.69-acre parcel. A radio frequency (RF) emissions report was prepared as part of the proposed project. The report concluded that the proposed project will operate within the applicable Federal Communications Commission (FCC) limit. Any future telecommunications facility on the site would be analyzed for potential environmental impacts, and all future facilities would also be required to meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) radio frequency emission limits. Similar development in the same place over time, developed in conformance with the applicable

ordinance, policy and FCC regulations would not result in a cumulatively significant impact. The closest existing telecommunications facility to the proposed project is located approximately six miles to the southeast. County requests for collocation of telecom projects, where feasible, reduces cumulative effects (visual, land disturbances, etc.). Therefore, this exception to the categorical exemption 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 is located outside of sensitive habitat areas, and there are no unusual circumstances that would cause the project to have a significant effect on the environment. In addition, as stated above, the RF emissions generated from the proposed project would be within the FCC emissions limits, and therefore would not have a significant effect. Therefore, this exception to the categorical exemption 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 is located within the view corridor of State Highway 154, a designated Scenic Highway. As designed, the new telecommunication facility would appear as a faux eucalyptus tree in order to blend into the natural surroundings and not be substantially visible from the roadway. Additionally, the proposed antenna support structure will protrude into the skyline and be visible to eastbound travelers on SR 154. However, the visibility would be limited to approximately 3-5 seconds, and will be visible while the vehicle is navigating a curve in the highway, at a distance of approximately 2,372 feet (as measured in a straight line extended due south between the structure and SR 154). The antenna support structure would not be visible to westbound travelers due to intervening topography and existing mature vegetation. The proposed faux eucalyptus structure has been strategically placed behind a 30-foot tall ridge to minimize its visibility from public views. The proposed facility will not be substantially visible from public viewing areas as it will be camouflaged as a faux eucalyptus tree to blend in and integrate with the natural environment. The proposed support equipment within the lease area would not be visible from Highway 154. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in damage to a scenic resource and this exception to the categorical exemption does not apply.

- (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.**

The project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (hazardous and toxic waste sites). In addition, there is no evidence of

historic or current use or disposal of hazardous or toxic materials on the project site. Therefore, this exception to the categorical exemption 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 proposed development would have no impact on any historical resource. Therefore, this exception to the categorical exemption does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Florence Trotter-Cadena

Phone #: 934-6253

Department/Division Representative: _____ Date: _____

Acceptance Date: _____

distribution: Hearing Support Staff

Date Filed by County Clerk: _____.