

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Mail Stop: A-33
 ARCC-Recorder
 Attn: Jobell Russit
 1600 Pacific Highway
 San Diego, CA 92101

ROM: Mail Stop: 0-368
 County of San Diego,
 General Services
 Attn: Marcus Lubich
 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 410
 San Diego, CA 92123

State Clearinghouse

SUBJECT: FILING OF NOTICE OF EXEMPTION IN COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE SECTION 21108 OR 21152

Project Name: Compassionate Emergency Solutions and Pathways to Housing Project: Troy Sleeping Cabins

Project Location: 2800 Sweetwater Road, Lemon Grove, CA 91945 (No APN)

Project Applicant: County of San Diego General Services
 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 410, San Diego, CA 92123

Project Description: The project consists of the proposed leasing of Caltrans property and construction of approximately 80 sleeping cabins, for use as emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness. The cabins would not have kitchens or bathrooms but would have electricity and fire sprinklers. The project would also include administration structures, communal restroom facilities, shower facilities, communal food storage facilities, other supply storage, medical structure, staff breakroom structure, laundry facilities, guard stands, pet area, parking lot for workers, perimeter fencing with privacy screening, entry/exit gates for cars and pedestrians, lighting, landscaping, trash enclosures, a security system, covered canopy area and picnic tables, and sidewalk and driveway improvements. The Troy Sleeping Cabins Project would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The term of the proposed lease is for seven years. The development and operation of the site as an emergency shelter use will improve shelter options in the Spring Valley and Lemon Grove area, while individuals and families experiencing homelessness seek permanent housing. The site is currently vacant disturbed area and owned by Caltrans. While the site is previously disturbed, it is possible that native soil could be uncovered during any minor excavation for utilities or site improvements. Therefore, as part of the project and in accordance with existing regulations, an archaeological monitor will be onsite during all excavation activities to ensure any potential resources discovered on the site are protected and impacts are avoided. In addition, biological surveys would be conducted prior to any removal of existing vegetation on the site during bird nesting season to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This project is a specific action necessary to mitigate the emergency associated with the San Diego County declared emergencies for shelter crisis and homelessness as a public health crisis.

Agency Approving Project: County of San Diego

Date Form Completed: June 27, 2024

County Contact Person: Dijana Beck

Telephone: 619-338-2636

This is to advise that the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors has approved the above-described project on **July 16, 2024 (#)** and found the project to be exempt from the CEQA under the following criteria:

Exempt status and applicable section of the CEQA ("C") and/or State CEQA Guidelines ("G"): (check only one)

- Declared Emergency [C 21080(b)(3); G 15269(a)]
 Emergency Project [C 21080(b)(4); G 15269(b)(c)]
 Statutory Exemption. C Section: 15301(l)(3) – Existing Facilities, 15303 – New Construction of Small Structures, 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land, and 15311 – Accessory Structures.
 Categorical Exemption. G Section(s):
 G 15182 – Residential Projects Pursuant to a Specific Plan
 Activity is exempt from the CEQA because it is not a project as defined in Section 15378.
 G 15061(b)(3) - It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment and the activity is not subject to the CEQA.

Statement of reasons why project is exempt:

The County of San Diego Board of Supervisor's declared a Shelter Crisis on September 11, 2018 (6) and subsequently declared homelessness a public health crisis on September 27, 2022 (21). The City of Lemon Grove declared an emergency shelter crisis on July 16, 2023 (4). Taken together, the unexpected and dramatic increase in homelessness without the ability to obtain shelter, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, hepatitis A outbreaks, and recent flooding events, is an emergency in unincorporated San Diego County. San Diego County had a 20% increase in homelessness 2023, and currently for every person that is housed 6 new persons become homeless. This situation presents documented dangers to health, life, and property and a burden on, and loss of access to, essential public services, which presents an emergency as defined by CEQA. The health and safety of unsheltered persons in the unincorporated area of San Diego County is threatened by a lack of shelter. The leasing of Caltrans property and development of the Troy Sleeping Cabins site are statutorily exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Section 15269 (c) because they are specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate San Diego County's shelter crisis. The project is necessary to avoid and prevent the emergency by providing shelter and services to the homeless occupants of the shelter, and by facilitating their transition from the homelessness to this shelter, and then on to long-term housing. The County's Troy Sleeping Cabin site is a critical short-term project that will address the high-risk issues facing people experiencing homelessness. The Project, therefore, is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code, Section 21080(b)(4), as a specific action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency, and as reflected in Article 18 of the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15269(c). The demolition and removal of existing fencing on the site is exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15301(l). The construction of the sleeping cabin shelter is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3), as the project would involve the installation of temporary, small trailers to support the facility to provide security, medical and community services, administration, storage, toilets, and showers. Because of the limited number and size of structures, this exemption would apply. The construction of the sleeping cabins shelter is also exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land (Class 4), would require some exterior alterations to existing utility lines including street improvements, minor alterations to land including minor grading, installation of sleeping cabins, minor utility extensions (e.g., electrical, water, and sewer), irrigation lines, pavement improvements. However, the project would be considered a minor, temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, thereby qualifying for this exemption. The project would be located on a vacant site owned by Caltrans, located on the northwest corner of the Troy Street and Sweetwater Road intersection in Lemon Grove. The project will operate for a timeframe of approximately seven years. Accessory structures including privacy fencing with pedestrian and vehicle entry gates, security lighting, administrative trailers, security stand, and restrooms and hand washing stations would be considered appurtenant to the small cabins shelter and exempt under CEQA Section 15311. Additionally, the project would not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption. We assume that compliance with existing regulations and project design features will avoid any potential impacts to resources, such as biological resources and cultural resources. The project is not located within a sensitive environment, the effects would not combine with other potential projects that could contribute to a cumulative effect, there is no evidence that a significant effect would occur, the site is not located near a scenic highway, it is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, and there are no historical resources onsite. While the site is previously disturbed, it is possible that native soil could be uncovered during minor grading. Therefore, as part of the project and in accordance with existing regulations, an archaeological monitor will be onsite during all excavation activities to ensure any potential resources discovered on the site are protected and impacts are avoided. In addition, biological surveys would be conducted prior to any removal of existing vegetation on the site during bird nesting season to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Additionally, the project site is not considered environmentally sensitive, there would not be successive projects of the same type in the same place that would result in cumulative impacts, no unusual circumstances that create the reasonable possibility of significant effects, no impacts to scenic resources, site is not identified as being affected by hazardous wastes or clean-up problems, and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The following is to be filled in only upon formal project approval by the appropriate County of San Diego decision-making body.

Signature: _____ Telephone: 858-414-4593

Name (Print): Marcus Lubich Title: Environmental Project Manager

This Notice of Exemption has been signed and filed by the County of San Diego.

This notice must be filed with the Recorder/County Clerk as soon as possible after project approval by the decision-making body. The Recorder/County Clerk must post this notice within 24 hours of receipt and for a period of not less than 30 days. At the termination of the posting period, the Recorder/County Clerk must return this notice to the Department address listed above along with evidence of the posting period. The originating Department must then retain the returned notice for a period of not less than twelve months. Reference: CEQA Guidelines Section 15062.