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Title 14. Natural Resources

Division 6. Resources Agency

Chapter 3. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act

Article 18. Statutory Exemptions

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§ 15282. Other Statutory Exemptions.

The following is a list of existing statutory exemptions. Each subdivision summarizes statutory exemptions found in the California Code. Lead agencies are not to rely on the language contained in the summaries below but must rely on the actual statutory language that creates the exemption. This list is intended to assist lead agencies in finding them, but not as a substitute for them. This section is merely a reference tool.

- (a) The notification of discovery of Native American burial sites as set forth in Section 5097.98(c) of the Public Resources Code.
- (b) Specified prison facilities as set forth in Sections 21080.01, 21080.02, 21080.03 and 21080.07 of the Public Resources Code.
- (c) The lease or purchase of the rail right-of-way used for the San Francisco Peninsula commute service between San Francisco and San Jose as set forth in Section 21080.05 of the Public Resources Code.
- (d) Any activity or approval necessary for or incidental to project funding or authorization for the expenditure of funds for the project, by the Rural Economic Development Infrastructure Panel as set forth in Section 21080.08 of the Public Resources Code.
- (e) The conversion of an existing rental mobilehome park to a resident initiated subdivision, cooperative, or condominium for mobilehomes as set forth in Section 21080.8 of the Public Resources Code.
- (f) Settlements of title and boundary problems by the State Lands Commission and to exchanges or leases in connection with those settlements as set forth in Section 21080.11 of the Public Resources Code.
- (g) Any railroad grade separation project which eliminates an existing grade crossing or which reconstructs an existing grade separation as set forth in Section 21080.13 of the Public Resources Code.**
- (h) The adoption of an ordinance regarding second units in a single-family or multifamily residential zone by a city or county to implement the provisions of Sections 65852.1 and 65852.2 of the Government Code as set forth in Section 21080.17 of the Public Resources Code.


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PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE - PRC

DIVISION 13. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY [21000 - 21189.57] *(Division 13 added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1433.)*

CHAPTER 2.6. General [21080 - 21098] *(Chapter 2.6 added by Stats. 1972, Ch. 1154.)*

21080. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this division, this division shall apply to discretionary projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies, including, but not limited to, the enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of zoning variances, the issuance of conditional use permits, and the approval of tentative subdivision maps unless the project is exempt from this division.

(b) This division does not apply to any of the following activities:

(1) Ministerial projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies.

(2) Emergency repairs to public service facilities necessary to maintain service.

(3) Projects undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8550) of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(4) Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency.

(5) Projects which a public agency rejects or disapproves.

(6) Actions undertaken by a public agency relating to any thermal powerplant site or facility, including the expenditure, obligation, or encumbrance of funds by a public agency for planning, engineering, or design purposes, or for the conditional sale or purchase of equipment, fuel, water (except groundwater), steam, or power for a thermal powerplant, if the powerplant site and related facility will be the subject of an environmental impact report, negative declaration, or other document, prepared pursuant to a regulatory program certified pursuant to Section 21080.5, which will be prepared by the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, by the Public Utilities Commission, or by the city or county in which the powerplant and related facility would be located if the environmental impact report, negative declaration, or document includes the environmental impact, if any, of the action described in this paragraph.

(7) Activities or approvals necessary to the bidding for, hosting or staging of, and funding or carrying out of, an Olympic games under the authority of the International Olympic Committee, except for the construction of facilities necessary for the Olympic games.

(8) The establishment, modification, structuring, restructuring, or approval of rates, tolls, fares, or other charges by public agencies which the public agency finds are for the purpose of (A) meeting operating expenses, including employee wage rates and fringe benefits, (B) purchasing or leasing supplies, equipment, or materials, (C) meeting financial reserve needs and requirements, (D) obtaining funds for capital projects necessary to maintain service within existing service areas, or (E) obtaining funds necessary to maintain those intracity transfers as are authorized by city charter. The public agency shall incorporate written findings in the record of any proceeding in which an exemption under this paragraph is claimed setting forth with specificity the basis for the claim of exemption.

(9) All classes of projects designated pursuant to Section 21084.

(10) A project for the institution or increase of passenger or commuter services on rail or highway rights-of-way already in use, including modernization of existing stations and parking facilities. For purposes of this paragraph, "highway" shall have the same meaning as defined in Section 360 of the Vehicle Code.

(11) A project for the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities.

(12) Facility extensions not to exceed four miles in length which are required for the transfer of passengers from or to exclusive public mass transit guideway or busway public transit services.

(13) A project for the development of a regional transportation improvement program, the state transportation improvement program, or a congestion management program prepared pursuant to Section 65089 of the Government Code.

(14) Any project or portion thereof located in another state which will be subject to environmental impact review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 4321 et seq.) or similar state laws of that state. Any emissions or discharges that would have a significant effect on the environment in this state are subject to this division.

(15) Projects undertaken by a local agency to implement a rule or regulation imposed by a state agency, board, or commission under a certified regulatory program pursuant to Section 21080.5. Any site-specific effect of the project which was not analyzed as a significant effect on the environment in the plan or other written documentation required by Section 21080.5 is subject to this division.

(c) If a lead agency determines that a proposed project, not otherwise exempt from this division, would not have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency shall adopt a negative declaration to that effect. The negative declaration shall be prepared for the proposed project in either of the following circumstances:

(1) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

(2) An initial study identifies potentially significant effects on the environment, but (A) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur, and (B) there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment.

(d) If there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, an environmental impact report shall be prepared.

(e) (1) For the purposes of this section and this division, substantial evidence includes fact, a reasonable assumption predicated upon fact, or expert opinion supported by fact.

(2) Substantial evidence is not argument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion or narrative, evidence that is clearly inaccurate or erroneous, or evidence of social or economic impacts that do not contribute to, or are not caused by, physical impacts on the environment.

(f) As a result of the public review process for a mitigated negative declaration, including administrative decisions and public hearings, the lead agency may conclude that certain mitigation measures identified pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) are infeasible or otherwise undesirable. In those circumstances, the lead agency, prior to approving the project, may delete those mitigation measures and substitute for them other mitigation measures that the lead agency finds, after holding a public hearing on the matter, are equivalent or more effective in mitigating significant effects on the environment to a less than significant level and that do not cause any potentially significant effect on the environment. If those new mitigation measures are made conditions of project approval or are otherwise made part of the project approval, the deletion of the former measures and the substitution of the new mitigation measures shall not constitute an action or circumstance requiring recirculation of the mitigated negative declaration.

(g) Nothing in this section shall preclude a project applicant or any other person from challenging, in an administrative or judicial proceeding, the legality of a condition of project approval imposed by the lead agency. If, however, any condition of project approval set aside by either an administrative body or court was necessary to avoid or lessen the likelihood of the occurrence of a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency's approval of the negative declaration and project shall be invalid and a new environmental review process shall be conducted before the project can be reapproved, unless the lead agency substitutes a new condition that the lead agency finds, after holding a public hearing on the matter, is equivalent to, or more effective in, lessening or avoiding significant effects on the environment and that does not cause any potentially significant effect on the environment.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 523, Sec. 1. (SB 788) Effective January 1, 2014.)


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TITLE 7. PLANNING AND LAND USE [65000 - 66499.58] (*Heading of Title 7 amended by Stats. 1974, Ch. 1536.*)

DIVISION 1. PLANNING AND ZONING [65000 - 66301] (*Heading of Division 1 added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 1536.*)

CHAPTER 2.6. Congestion Management [65088 - 65089.10]

(*Chapter 2.6 added by Stats. 1989, Ch. 106, Sec. 9.*)

65089. (a) A congestion management program shall be developed, adopted, and updated biennially, consistent with the schedule for adopting and updating the regional transportation improvement program, for every county that includes an urbanized area, and shall include every city and the county. The program shall be adopted at a noticed public hearing of the agency. The program shall be developed in consultation with, and with the cooperation of, the transportation planning agency, regional transportation providers, local governments, the department, and the air pollution control district or the air quality management district, either by the county transportation commission, or by another public agency, as designated by resolutions adopted by the county board of supervisors and the city councils of a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population in the incorporated area of the county.

(b) The program shall contain all of the following elements:

(1) (A) Traffic level of service standards established for a system of highways and roadways designated by the agency. The highway and roadway system shall include at a minimum all state highways and principal arterials. No highway or roadway designated as a part of the system shall be removed from the system. All new state highways and principal arterials shall be designated as part of the system, except when it is within an infill opportunity zone. Level of service (LOS) shall be measured by Circular 212, by the most recent version of the Highway Capacity Manual, or by a uniform methodology adopted by the agency that is consistent with the Highway Capacity Manual. The determination as to whether an alternative method is consistent with the Highway Capacity Manual shall be made by the regional agency, except that the department instead shall make this determination if either (i) the regional agency is also the agency, as those terms are defined in Section 65088.1, or (ii) the department is responsible for preparing the regional transportation improvement plan for the county.

(B) In no case shall the LOS standards established be below the level of service E or the current level, whichever is farthest from level of service A except when the area is in an infill opportunity zone. When the level of service on a segment or at an intersection fails to attain the established level of service standard outside an infill opportunity zone, a deficiency plan shall be adopted pursuant to Section 65089.4.

(2) A performance element that includes performance measures to evaluate current and future multimodal system performance for the movement of people and goods. At a minimum, these performance measures shall incorporate highway and roadway system performance, and measures established for the frequency and routing of public transit, and for the coordination of transit service provided by separate operators. These performance measures shall support mobility, air quality, land use, and economic objectives, and shall be used in the development of the capital improvement program required pursuant to paragraph (5), deficiency plans required pursuant to Section 65089.4, and the land use analysis program required pursuant to paragraph (4).

(3) A travel demand element that promotes alternative transportation methods, including, but not limited to, carpools, vanpools, transit, bicycles, and park-and-ride lots; improvements in the balance between jobs and housing; and other strategies, including, but not limited to, flexible work hours, telecommuting, and parking management programs. The agency shall consider parking cash-out programs during the development and update of the travel demand element.

(4) A program to analyze the impacts of land use decisions made by local jurisdictions on regional transportation systems, including an estimate of the costs associated with mitigating those impacts. This program shall measure, to the extent possible, the impact to the transportation system using the performance measures described in paragraph (2). In no case shall the program include an estimate of the costs of mitigating the impacts of

interregional travel. The program shall provide credit for local public and private contributions to improvements to regional transportation systems. However, in the case of toll road facilities, credit shall only be allowed for local public and private contributions which are unreimbursed from toll revenues or other state or federal sources. The agency shall calculate the amount of the credit to be provided. The program defined under this section may require implementation through the requirements and analysis of the California Environmental Quality Act, in order to avoid duplication.

(5) A seven-year capital improvement program, developed using the performance measures described in paragraph (2) to determine effective projects that maintain or improve the performance of the multimodal system for the movement of people and goods, to mitigate regional transportation impacts identified pursuant to paragraph (4). The program shall conform to transportation-related vehicle emission air quality mitigation measures, and include any project that will increase the capacity of the multimodal system. It is the intent of the Legislature that, when roadway projects are identified in the program, consideration be given for maintaining bicycle access and safety at a level comparable to that which existed prior to the improvement or alteration. The capital improvement program may also include safety, maintenance, and rehabilitation projects that do not enhance the capacity of the system but are necessary to preserve the investment in existing facilities.

(c) The agency, in consultation with the regional agency, cities, and the county, shall develop a uniform data base on traffic impacts for use in a countywide transportation computer model and shall approve transportation computer models of specific areas within the county that will be used by local jurisdictions to determine the quantitative impacts of development on the circulation system that are based on the countywide model and standardized modeling assumptions and conventions. The computer models shall be consistent with the modeling methodology adopted by the regional planning agency. The data bases used in the models shall be consistent with the data bases used by the regional planning agency. Where the regional agency has jurisdiction over two or more counties, the data bases used by the agency shall be consistent with the data bases used by the regional agency.

(d) (1) The city or county in which a commercial development will implement a parking cash-out program that is included in a congestion management program pursuant to subdivision (b), or in a deficiency plan pursuant to Section 65089.4, shall grant to that development an appropriate reduction in the parking requirements otherwise in effect for new commercial development.

(2) At the request of an existing commercial development that has implemented a parking cash-out program, the city or county shall grant an appropriate reduction in the parking requirements otherwise applicable based on the demonstrated reduced need for parking, and the space no longer needed for parking purposes may be used for other appropriate purposes.

(e) Pursuant to the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and regulations adopted pursuant to the act, the department shall submit a request to the Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator to accept the congestion management program in lieu of development of a new congestion management system otherwise required by the act.

(Amended by Stats. 2002, Ch. 505, Sec. 4. Effective January 1, 2003.)