

Tulare 245 Culvert Rehabilitation Project

On State Route 245 at various locations, from the junction with
State Route 198 to the Tulare/Fresno County line

06-TUL-245-0.0/33.0

Project EA: 06-0X070 Project ID: 0618000016

State Clearinghouse Number: 2023020265

Initial Study with Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

April 2023



General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Jason Adair, Associate Environmental Planner

The Initial Study circulated to the public for review and comment for 32 days between February 10, 2023, and March 13, 2023. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix B. Elsewhere, language has been added throughout the document to indicate where a change has been made since the circulation of the draft environmental document. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

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State Clearinghouse Number: 2023020265
06-TUL-245-0.0/33.0
Project EA: 06-0X070 Project ID: 0618000016

Repair or replace culverts at various locations on State Route 245
from post miles 0.0 to 33.0 in Tulare County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Negative Declaration**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation


Philip Vallejo
Deputy District Director
Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

4/6/2023

Date

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Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2023020265

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-TUL-245-0.0/33.0

EA/Project Number: 06-0X070/0618000016

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will repair or replace culverts on State Route 245 in Tulare County at various locations from the junction of State Route 245 and State Route 198 to the Tulare/Fresno County line.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 6. Based on this study, it is determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project will have no effect on aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, energy, geology and soils, paleontology, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfires.

The project will have no significant effect on waters and wetlands, greenhouse gas emissions and cultural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Vallejo', written over a horizontal line.

Philip Vallejo
Deputy District Director
Environmental
California Department of Transportation

4/6/2023

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Project.....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Purpose and Need.....	1
1.2.1	Purpose.....	1
1.2.2	Need	1
1.3	Project Description.....	2
1.4	Project Alternatives.....	4
1.4.1	Build Alternative	4
1.4.2	No-Build (No-Action) Alternative	21
1.5	Identification of a Preferred Alternative.....	21
1.6	Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.....	21
1.7	Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion	23
1.8	Permits and Approvals Needed	23
Chapter 2	CEQA Evaluation.....	25
2.1	CEQA Environmental Checklist.....	25
2.1.1	Aesthetics	25
2.1.2	Agriculture and Forest Resources.....	26
2.1.3	Air Quality	27
2.1.4	Biological Resources.....	28
2.1.5	Cultural Resources.....	36
2.1.6	Energy.....	38
2.1.7	Geology and Soils.....	38
2.1.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	39
2.1.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	40
2.1.10	Hydrology and Water Quality	41
2.1.11	Land Use and Planning.....	42
2.1.12	Mineral Resources.....	43
2.1.13	Noise.....	43
2.1.14	Population and Housing.....	44
2.1.15	Public Services	44
2.1.16	Recreation	45
2.1.17	Transportation.....	45
2.1.18	Tribal Cultural Resources	46
2.1.19	Utilities and Service Systems.....	47
2.1.20	Wildfire.....	47
2.1.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance	48
Appendix A	Title VI Policy Statement.....	51
Appendix B	Comment Letters and Responses	53
Appendix C	State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence Letter	55

Chapter 1 **Project**

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to repair or replace 150 culverts at various locations on State Route 245 in Tulare County from the junction of State Route 245 and State Route 198 to the Tulare/Fresno County line.

State Route 245 in Tulare County begins about 2.5 miles northeast of the City of Exeter at the junction with State Route 198. This junction sits in a flat agricultural area consisting mostly of citrus groves. State Route 245 extends northward from State Route 198 through the City of Woodlake. About 5 miles north of Woodlake, State Route 245 begins to climb out of the relatively flat agricultural land into the foothill region of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. The project ends at about 3,200 feet in elevation at the Tulare/Fresno County line just north of the unincorporated community of Badger.

Currently, this segment of State Route 245 is a conventional two-lane highway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes and 0- to 2-foot-wide outside shoulders.

The preliminary estimated construction cost of the project is \$14,800,000. The project is to be funded from the 2020 State Highway Operation and Protection Program's Drainage System Restoration Program in the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

Construction is scheduled to begin in December 2024 and will take about 200 working days to complete. No night work is planned for the project. Tree removal is not anticipated during construction of the project.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to repair or replace existing culverts within the project limits.

1.2.2 Need

The project is needed to prevent flooding of the roadway and extend the service life of the culverts. The culverts have perforations, heavy rust, joint separations, and damaged end treatments, and they are clogged with sediment and/or debris.

1.3 Project Description

The project will repair or replace 150 culverts on State Route 245 in Tulare County at various locations from the junction of State Route 245 and State Route 198 to the Tulare/Fresno County line. See Figure 1-1 for the project vicinity map and Figure 1-2 for the project location map.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

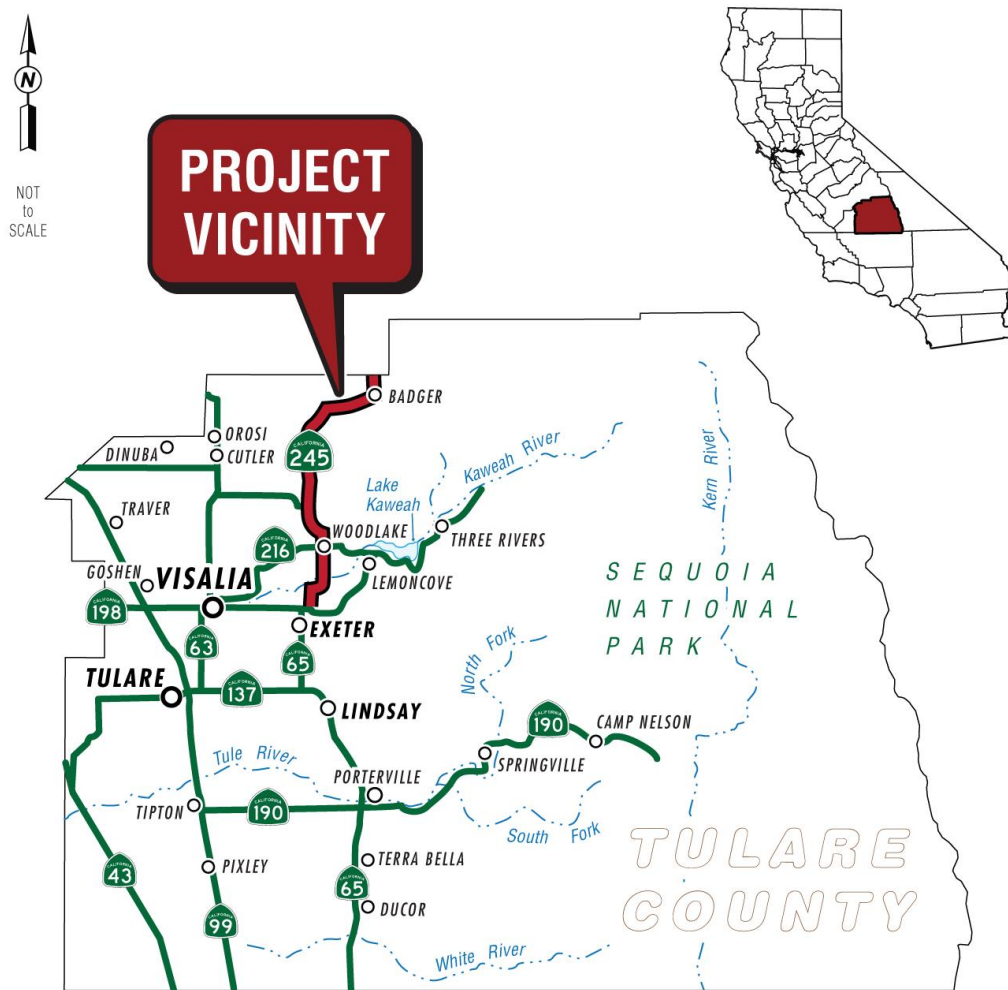
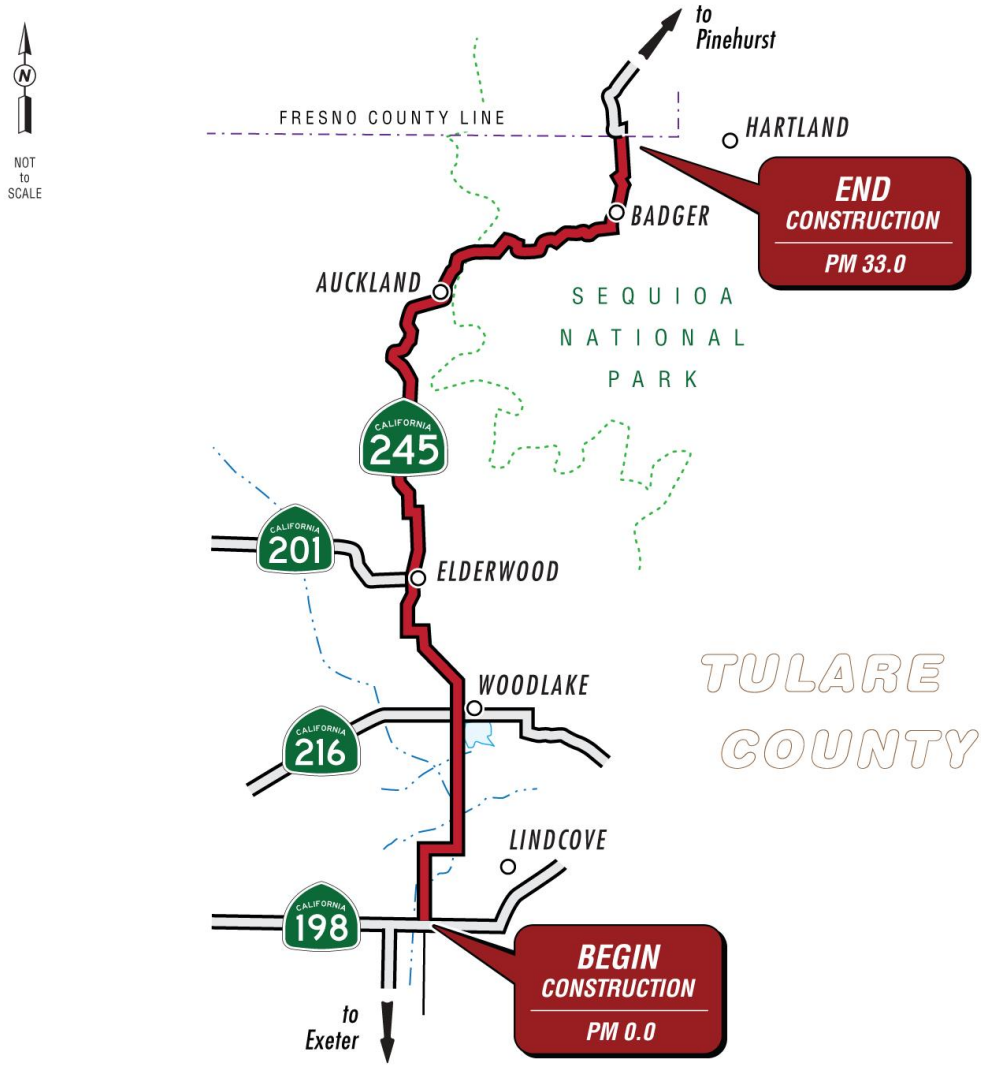


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives are being considered for the project: a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative will repair and/or replace the identified deteriorating culverts within the project limits.

Most of the existing culverts are made of corrugated steel pipe. A few culverts are either a combination of corrugated steel pipe and concrete or completely constructed of concrete. Some of the repair work will involve installing culvert barrel linings using the cured-in-place pipe method. Grading around the inlet and outlet of the existing culvert will be minimal.

The line and grade of the new culvert will match that of the existing culvert unless the culvert needs to be lowered to maintain the minimum cover over the pipe, or if a change in the profile or alignment of the culvert is needed for proper installation.

At the time environmental studies began, 157 culverts were planned for repair or replacement. Since that time, 7 locations were eliminated from the scope of work due to environmental concerns or because a prior construction project already addressed the culvert issues. The 7 culvert locations eliminated from the scope of work are Locations 13, 14, 15, 18, 67, 72 and 73. These culvert locations are identified as “Eliminated” in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 lists each culvert location by post mile, the material of the existing culvert, the culvert diameter in inches, and the improvements to repair or replace each culvert. In column 3, the abbreviation CSP is used for “corrugated steel pipe” due to the limited space.

Table 1-1 Culvert Improvements on State Route 245

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
1	1.01	CSP	9.6	Replace
2	1.76	CSP	18	Replace
3	2.74	CSP	12	Replace
4	3.00	CSP	24	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
5	3.38	CSP	18	Replace
6	3.53	CSP	18	Replace
7	3.68	CSP	18	Replace
8	3.88	CSP	36	Culvert Barrel Lining
9	4.00	Concrete/CSP	24	Replace
10	4.93	CSP	30	Replace
11	5.32	CSP	24	Culvert Barrel Lining
12	6.39	CSP	18	Replace
13 Eliminated	6.69	Concrete/CSP	12	Debris Removal/Flush Sediment
14 Eliminated	6.95	CSP	18	Debris Removal/Flush Sediment
15 Eliminated	7.06	CSP	24	Debris Removal/Flush Sediment
16	7.81	CSP	18	Replace
17	8.10	CSP	18	Replace
18 Eliminated	8.33	Concrete/CSP	24/30/36	Debris Removal/Repair Concrete
19	8.64	CSP	24	Culvert Barrel Lining
20	8.91	CSP	24	Culvert Barrel Lining
21	9.34	CSP	12	Replace
22	9.50	CSP	24	Cut End Section/Add Flared End Section
23	9.67	CSP	18/24	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
24	9.88	CSP	24	Replace
25	9.97	CSP	24	Replace
26	10.30	CSP	12	Replace
27	10.89	CSP	18	Replace
28	11.99	CSP	18	Replace
29	12.51	CSP	12	Replace
30	13.70	CSP	18	Replace
31	14.00	CSP	24	Replace
32	14.10	CSP	9	Replace
33	14.11	CSP	24	Re-channel, add Flared End Section and Rock Slope Protection
34	14.14	CSP	48	Pave Invert
35	14.50	CSP	12	Replace
36	14.73	CSP	12	Replace
37	14.91	Concrete	15	Replace
38	15.60	CSP	8	Replace
39	15.87	Concrete/CSP	18	Replace
40	17.36	CSP	24	Replace
41	17.79	CSP	12	Replace
42	18.20	CSP	30	Culvert Barrel Lining

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
43	18.27	CSP	12	Replace
44	18.41	CSP	18	Replace
45	18.50	CSP	12	Replace
46	18.57	CSP	12	Replace
47	18.68	CSP	12	Replace
48	18.76	CSP	12	Replace
49	18.80	CSP	30	Culvert Barrel Lining
50	18.97	CSP	12	Replace
51	19.00	CSP	12	Replace
52	19.04	CSP	18	Replace
53	19.12	CSP	12	Replace
54	19.20	CSP	12	Replace
55	19.29	CSP	36	Pave Culvert Bottom
56	19.32	CSP	12	Replace
57	19.42	CSP	9.6	Replace
58	19.48	CSP	9.6	Replace
59	19.54	CSP	12	Replace
60	20.00	CSP	12	Replace
61	20.27	CSP	12	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
62	20.42	CSP	12	Replace
63	20.50	CSP	12	Replace
64	20.55	CSP	12	Replace
65	20.60	CSP	12	Replace
66	20.67	CSP	12	Replace
67 Eliminated	20.92	CSP	24	Replace
68	21.15	CSP	12	Replace
69	21.34	CSP	12	Replace
70	21.45	CSP	12	Replace
71	21.95	CSP	36	Culvert Barrel Lining
72 Eliminated	22.04	CSP	36	Replace
73 Eliminated	22.14	CSP	24	Replace
74	22.43	CSP	12	Replace
75	22.59	Concrete	12	Replace
76	22.61	CSP	15	Replace
77	22.71	CSP	8	Replace
78	22.79	CSP	12	Replace
79	23.16	CSP	8	Replace
80	23.30	CSP	30	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
81	23.47	CSP	12	Replace
82	23.55	CSP	12	Replace
83	23.60	CSP	12	Replace
84	23.64	CSP	12	Replace
85	23.70	CSP	8	Replace
86	23.76	CSP	8	Replace
87	23.81	CSP	8	Replace
88	23.91	CSP	15	Replace
89	24.45	CSP	36	Replace
90	24.54	CSP	12	Replace
91	24.69	CSP	12	Replace
92	24.74	CSP	18	Replace
93	24.75	CSP	36	Repair Culvert Bottom
94	24.91	CSP	36	Replace
95	24.97	CSP	36	Replace
96	25.06	CSP	12	Replace
97	25.17	CSP	12	Replace
98	25.19	CSP	12	Replace
99	25.30	CSP	12	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
100	25.73	CSP	12	Replace
101	25.79	CSP	12	Replace
102	26.14	CSP	12	Replace
103	26.25	CSP	12	Replace
104	26.32	CSP	8	Replace
105	26.53	CSP	12	Replace
106	26.62	CSP	24	Replace
107	26.69	CSP	12	Replace
108	26.88	CSP	36	Replace
109	27.02	CSP	12	Replace
110	27.14	CSP	12	Replace
111	27.20	CSP	12	Replace
112	27.29	CSP	12	Replace
113	27.35	CSP	12	Replace
114	27.58	CSP	12	Replace
115	27.74	CSP	24	Culvert Barrel Lining
116	28.06	CSP	12	Replace
117	28.12	CSP	12	Replace
118	28.31	CSP	18	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
119	28.38	Concrete	12	Replace
120	28.53	CSP	12	Replace
121	28.64	CSP	12	Replace
122	28.69	CSP	12	Replace
123	28.79	CSP	12	Replace
124	28.87	CSP	36	Replace
125	28.89	CSP	12	Replace
126	28.94	CSP	12	Replace
127	29.15	CSP	12	Replace
128	29.23	CSP	12	Replace
129	29.38	CSP	12	Replace
130	29.43	CSP	12	Replace
131	29.56	CSP	12	Replace
132	29.69	CSP	12	Replace
133	29.80	CSP	18	Replace
134	29.98	CSP	12	Replace
135	30.08	CSP	12	Replace
136	30.15	CSP	12	Replace
137	30.23	CSP	9.6	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
138	30.25	CSP	12	Replace
139	30.31	CSP	12	Replace
140	30.65	CSP	12	Replace
141	30.82	CSP	12	Replace
142	30.92	CSP	12	Replace
143	31.09	CSP	12	Replace
144	31.16	CSP	8	Replace
145	31.22	CSP	18	Replace
146	31.27	Concrete/CSP	12	Replace
147	31.50	CSP	24	Replace
148	31.58	CSP	12	Replace
149	31.70	CSP	24	Replace
150	31.88	CSP	12	Replace
151	31.99	CSP	12	Replace
152	32.05	CSP	12	Replace
153	32.14	CSP	9.6	Replace
154	32.31	Concrete/CSP	24	Reline
155	32.36	CSP	24	Replace
156	32.45	CSP	12	Replace

Location	Post Mile	Culvert Material	Existing Diameter (Inches)	Improvement
157	32.66	CSP	12	Replace

No permanent right-of-way acquisition will be needed for this project. However, temporary construction easements will be needed because the Caltrans right-of-way is narrow along most parts of State Route 245. Table 1-2 shows the location number, post mile, Assessor's Parcel Number, and area of temporary construction easement in fractions of an acre. [Table 1-2 has been updated since the Draft Environmental Document circulated]. One temporary construction easement has been added for project construction at Location 47 and temporary construction easements that will not be required for construction have been identified with a "strikethrough."

Table 1-2 Temporary Construction Easements Needed

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Temporary Construction Easement Area (Acre)
1	1.01	112-110-002-000	0.002
2	1.76	112-090-007-000 112-090-002-000	0.023
3	2.74	112-080-029-000	0.005
4	3.00	112-080-029-000	0.005
5	3.38	112-080-020-000	0.002
10	4.93	113-410-005-000 112-050-010-000	0.007
17	8.10	057-060-013-000 057-060-029-000	0.010
19	8.64	057-060-009-000	0.003
20	8.91	057-050-022-000 057-050-016-000	0.008
21	9.34	057-050-043-000 057-050-002-000	0.008
27	10.89	057-100-001-000	0.005
31	14.00	036-160-007-000	0.004

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Temporary Construction Easement Area (Acre)
33	14.11	036-160-002-000	0.004
35	14.50	036-090-017-000	0.004
36	14.73	036-090-017-000	0.004
37	14.91	036-090-017-000	0.003
38	15.60	036-040-013-000	0.002
40	17.36	036-040-025-000	0.005
41	17.79	036-020-037-000	0.003
43	18.27	036-020-034-000	0.003
45	18.50	036-020-036-000	0.004
46	18.57	036-020-004-000	0.004
47	18.68	036-020-004-000	0.007
48	18.76	036-020-004-000	0.004
49	18.80	036-020-004-000	0.004
50	18.97	036-020-026-000	0.003
51	19.00	036-020-026-000	0.002
52	19.04	036-020-026-000	0.002
53	19.12	036-020-026-000	0.005
56	19.32	036-020-003-000	0.004
57	19.42	036-020-003-000	0.002
62	20.42	007-120-043-000	0.003

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Temporary Construction Easement Area (Acre)
63	20.50	007-120-043-000	0.005
70	21.45	007-120-040-000	0.001
71	21.95	007-120-034-000	0.003
75	22.59	007-120-023-000	0.003
76	22.61	007-120-023-000	0.007
77	22.71	007-120-023-000	0.004
78	22.79	007-120-023-000	0.006
83	23.60	007-320-003-000	0.002
84	23.64	007-320-003-000	0.002
89	24.45	007-230-003-000 007-230-002-000	0.002
93	24.75	007-230-002-000	0.003
94	24.91	077-230-003-000	0.003
103	26.25	007-230-006-000	0.005
108	26.88	007-230-006-000	0.007
109	27.02	007-230-006-000	0.008
110	27.14	007-230-005-000	0.004
112	27.29	007-230-005-000	0.003
113	27.35	007-220-007-000	0.004
116	28.06	007-070-059-000	0.003
117	28.12	007-070-059-000	0.005

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Temporary Construction Easement Area (Acre)
119	28.38	007-070-060-000	0.002
120	28.53	007-070-001-000	0.001
121	28.64	007-070-001-000	0.004
123	28.79	007-070-001-000	0.003
127	29.15	007-070-001-000	0.005
128	29.23	007-070-001-000	0.004
129	29.38	007-070-001-000	0.003
130	29.43	007-070-001-000	0.005
132	29.69	007-070-001-000	0.003
136	30.15	007-240-001-000	0.003
137	30.23	007-240-001-000	0.002
138	30.25	007-240-001-000	0.003
140	30.65	007-240-001-000	0.003
141	30.82	007-190-002-000	0.003
142	30.92	007-190-002-000	0.001
150	31.88	007-060-072-000	0.005
155	32.36	007-050-052-000	0.003
156	32.45	007-050-082-000	0.003

No right-of-way acquisition will be needed. However, permanent drainage easements will be acquired where existing culverts extend beyond the narrow Caltrans right-of-way. Table 1-3 shows the location number, post mile, Assessor's Parcel Number(s), and the area of permanent drainage

easements in fractions of an acre. [Table 1-3 has been updated since the Draft Environmental Document circulated]. One permanent drainage easement for project construction has been added at Location 52 and permanent drainage easements that will not be required for construction have been identified with a “strikethrough.”

Table 1-3 Permanent Drainage Easements Needed

Location	Post Mile	Assessor’s Parcel Number(s)	Permanent Construction Easement Area (Acre)
1	1.01	112-220-005-000	0.009
7	3.68	113-280-010-000	0.003
8	3.88	112-080-020-000	0.005
19	8.64	057-060-006-000	0.005
22	9.50	057-040-031-000	0.005
23	9.67	057-040-031-000	0.007
24	9.88	057-040-030-000	0.004
26	10.30	057-020-015-000 057-010-006-000	0.014
30	13.70	036-180-017-000 030-180-006-000	0.010
31	14.00	036-180-001-000	0.005
32	14.10	036-160-007-000 036-180-002-000	0.013
34	14.14	036-160-002-000 036-090-017-000	0.016
35	14.50	036-070-007-000	0.007
36	14.73	036-090-017-000	0.006
37	14.91	036-090-017-000	0.007
39	15.87	036-040-013-000	0.006

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Permanent Construction Easement Area (Acre)
42	18.20	036-020-034-000 036-020-036-000	0.019
43	18.27	036-020-036-000	0.006
44	18.41	036-020-034-000	0.014
46	18.57	036-020-004-000	0.006
50	18.97	036-020-026-000	0.006
51	19.00	036-020-026-000	0.011
52	19.04	036-020-026-000	0.004
54	19.20	036-020-026-000	0.006
55	19.29	036-020-003-000	0.019
56	19.32	036-020-003-000	0.007
57	19.42	036-020-003-000	0.006
58	19.48	036-020-003-000	0.010
59	19.54	036-020-003-000	0.006
60	20.00	036-020-002-000	0.007
61	20.27	007-120-011-000	0.009
64	20.55	007-120-043-000	0.005
65	20.60	007-120-043-000	0.005
66	20.67	007-120-043-000	0.006
68	21.15	007-120-039-000	0.007
69	21.34	007-120-040-000	0.005

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Permanent Construction Easement Area (Acre)
71	21.95	007-120-041-000	0.006
75	22.59	007-120-023-000	0.005
80	23.30	007-320-003-000	0.014
81	23.47	007-320-003-000	0.006
82	23.55	007-320-003-000	0.039
83	23.60	007-320-003-000	0.007
88	23.91	007-320-001-000	0.007
91	24.69	007-230-002-000	0.009
92	24.74	007-230-002-000	0.005
94	24.91	007-230-002-000	0.005
95	24.97	007-230-002-000	0.005
103	26.25	007-230-006-000	0.007
106	26.62	007-230-006-000	0.012
107	26.69	007-230-006-000	0.010
110	27.14	007-230-005-000	0.011
111	27.20	007-230-005-000	0.005
112	27.29	007-230-005-000	0.006
114	27.58	007-220-007-000	0.005
115	27.74	007-220-010-000	0.012
116	28.06	007-070-059-000	0.005

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Permanent Construction Easement Area (Acre)
118	28.31	007-070-060-000	0.012
122	28.69	007-070-001-000	0.006
124	28.87	007-070-001-000	0.019
125	28.89	007-070-001-000	0.006
127	29.15	007-070-001-000	0.010
128	29.23	007-070-001-000	0.011
129	29.38	007-070-001-000	0.005
131	29.56	007-070-001-000	0.007
133	29.80	007-240-008-000	0.008
134	29.98	007-240-007-000	0.006
135	30.08	007-240-001-000	0.017
141	30.82	007-190-002-000	0.005
142	30.92	007-190-002-000	0.008
143	31.09	007-190-006-000	0.006
146	31.27	007-190-015-000	0.020
147	31.50	007-060-073-000	0.008
148	31.58	007-060-073-000 007-060-072-000	0.033
149	31.70	007-060-073-000 007-060-072-000	0.017
151	31.99	007-050-083-000	0.006
153	32.14	007-050-083-000	0.005

Location	Post Mile	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)	Permanent Construction Easement Area (Acre)
154	32.31	007-050-082-000	0.029
155	32.36	007-050-082-000	0.006

State Route 245 is a two-lane conventional highway throughout the project area; one-way traffic control will be used during construction.

This project contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will leave the culverts along this stretch of State Route 245 as they are. The culverts will continue to deteriorate, causing potential flood damage and pavement failure. The No-Build Alternative will not meet the purpose and need of the project.

[The following section on the preferred alternative has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

The Build Alternative was selected as the preferred alternative because it will preserve the operational integrity of the highway system. Repairing and replacing the culverts is necessary to maintain the highway in good operating condition. The Build Alternative is the only alternative that meets the purpose and need of the project.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives

The project may include, but will not be limited to, the following Caltrans Standard Special Provisions:

- 7-1.02A General: Pertains to compliance with laws, regulations, orders, and decrees applicable to the project.
- 13-2 Water Pollution Control Program: Pertains to specifications for preparing a water pollution control program.

- 14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Area: Pertains to environmentally sensitive areas marked on the ground. Do not enter an environmentally sensitive area unless authorized. If breached, notify the resident engineer.
- 14-2.03 Archaeological Resources: If archaeological resources are discovered within or near construction limits, do not disturb the resources and immediately stop all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, secure the area and notify the resident engineer.
- 14-6.03 Species Protection: Pertains to protecting regulated species and their habitat that occur within or near the job site. Upon discovery of a regulated species, notify the resident engineer.
- 14-6.03B Bird Protection: Pertains to protecting migratory and nongame birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs. Upon discovery of an injured or dead bird or migratory or nongame bird nests that may be adversely affected by construction activities, immediately stop all work and notify the resident engineer. Exclusion devices, nesting-prevention measures, and removing constructed and unoccupied nests may be used.
- 14-7.03 Discovery of Unanticipated Paleontological Resources: If paleontological resources are discovered at the job site, do not disturb the resources and immediately stop all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, secure the area, and notify the resident engineer. Do not move paleontological resources or take them from the job site.
- 14-9.02 Air Pollution Control: Comply with air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the construction contract.
- 14-11.03 Hazardous Waste Management: Pertains to the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste.
- 14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, provide a water truck or tank on the job site.
- 14-11.12 (also 36-4 and/or 84-9.03B) Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking with Hazardous Waste Residue: Includes specifications for removing, handling, and disposing of yellow thermoplastic and yellow-painted traffic stripe and pavement marking. The residue from the removal of this material is a generated hazardous waste (lead chromate). Removal of existing yellow thermoplastic and yellow-painted traffic stripe and pavement marking exposes workers to health hazards that must be addressed in a Lead Compliance Plan.

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction:

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Will be obtained prior to construction.
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act, Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Will be obtained prior to construction.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	404 Nationwide Permit	Will be obtained prior to construction.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A “No Impact” answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Project Initiation Report dated June 2018, the following determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No Impact

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Considering that the project will not acquire any new right-of-way, the following determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	No Impact
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact

2.1.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	No Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	No Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the updated Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) dated November 2022, and the Aquatic Resources Delineation Report dated June 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	No Impact

Affected Environment

a, b, c) For details of biological studies, please refer to the Natural Environment Study in Volume 2 (also available upon request—see the last page of this document).

Special-Status Plant Species

Plants are of special concern based on federal, state, or local laws regulating their development, limited distributions, and/or the presence of habitat required by the special-status plants occurring onsite. Three plant species—Kings River monkeyflower, spiny-sepaled button-celery, and winter's sunflower—were found to have historic records of occurrence or potentially suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area. None of the three species was found in the Biological Study Area during the botanical surveys conducted throughout the growing season. However, these species could potentially be present within the action area (the area that will be directly affected by the project, plus adjacent areas that may be indirectly affected).

Kings River Monkeyflower (Erythranthe acutidens)

The Kings River monkeyflower grows only in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Due to the short-lived nature of water at most culvert locations, conditions within the action area generally remain drier than the moist sites preferred by this species.

Spiny-Sepaled Button-Celery (Eryngium spinosepalum)

The spiny-sepaled button-celery is widespread in California's San Joaquin Valley and southern Sierra Nevada foothills, typically occurring in northern hardpan and claypan vernal pools, and, less commonly, in roadside ditches, depressions, and swales in annual grassland, often associated with upland grasses and oak woodland.

While foothill woodland and seasonally wet drainages and disturbed areas are present throughout the action area, this species was not seen during botanical surveys.

Winter's Sunflower (Helianthus winteri)

Winter's sunflower is widespread in California's southern Sierra Nevada foothills, occurring in cismontane woodland and in valley and foothill grassland in steep south-facing grassy slopes, rock outcrops, and road cuts. Winter's sunflower is a perennial shrub with thick, woody stems reaching up to 13 feet tall. While valley grasslands are present throughout the Biological Study Area, this species was not seen during botanical surveys.

Special-Status Animal Species

Animals are of special concern based on federal, state, or local laws regulating their development, limited distributions, and/or the habitat requirements of special-status animals occurring onsite. Eight animal species

were found to have records of occurrence or potentially suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area.

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)

The American badger is an uncommon species, but its range extends throughout most of the state, except for the northern coastal areas. The American badger prefers dry, open stages of most shrubland and forest or herbaceous habitats. The badger dig burrows in loose, friable soils for cover and will frequently enlarge and use abandoned burrows of other wildlife.

No American badger or evidence of its presence was found during field surveys. While moderately suitable habitat is present within and adjacent to the Biological Study Area, the project action area does not contain suitable habitat for the American badger and no impacts to the American badger are anticipated from the project.

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

Cooper's hawk is a medium-sized hawk native to North America, found from southern Canada to Mexico. Cooper's hawks tend to occur in various types of temperate deciduous forest and mixed forest. They are also adaptable in all seasons to forested mountainous regions, especially foothills. The species can adjust well while breeding to various kinds of open woodlands, including small woodlots, riparian woodlands in dry country, pinyon woodlands, farmlands, and floodplains.

No nesting Cooper's hawks were found during surveys, but one Cooper's hawk was seen perched in the Biological Study Area and potential nesting trees are present in the action area.

Crotch's Bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*)

Crotch's bumblebee is widespread in grasslands and shrublands of western North America, inhabiting drier and warmer environments and tolerating a much narrower climate range than is typical of most other bumblebee species. This bumblebee is historically abundant throughout California and parts of northern Mexico and eastern Nevada.

Potentially suitable foothill grasslands and savannas are present through much of the Biological Study Area, particularly near Woodlake. Marginal quality nesting habitats favorable for most bumblebees are present throughout the project, including rodent burrows, leaf litter, tall grasses, bark and holes in trees, and many other small crevices appropriate for colonies. Though intensive capture surveys have not been performed for this project, visual encounter surveys were conducted as feasible during botanical surveys and no potential Crotch's bumblebees were seen during these surveys.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Northern goshawks are found throughout the northern portions of North America as well as Eurasia. In North America, their range extends southward along the Rocky Mountains, well into Mexico. In California, they occur throughout the Sierra Nevada range and the mountains of northwest California north of the Bay Area; they have a patchier distribution throughout Southern California.

No nesting goshawks were seen during surveys, but potential nesting trees are present within the action area.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

The pallid bat is a common species throughout California at low elevations and is present in various habitats throughout the state, including arid deserts, forests, woodlands, shrublands and grasslands in areas throughout the southwestern United States. It is most common in open dry habitats with rocky areas and day roosts in caves, crevices, mines, and sometimes hollow trees where it is protected from high temperatures, though a nearby water source is necessary.

Suitable habitat in the Biological Study Area is limited to hollowed trees, rocky outcrops, or structures, but no bat or evidence of bats (guano or urine staining) was found in or near the Biological Study Area.

Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*)

Spotted bats occur in a variety of habitats, most often in rocky, semi-arid and arid terrain, varying from ponderosa pine forests to scrub and open desert. They are solitary and prefer roosting in rock crevices on high cliffs and rocky outcrops.

Suitable habitat in the Biological Study Area is limited to hollowed trees, rocky outcrops, or structures, but no bat or evidence of bats (guano or urine staining) was found in or near the Biological Study Area.

Western Mastiff Bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)

The western mastiff bat occurs in open, semi-arid to arid habitats, including coastal and desert scrublands, conifer and deciduous woodlands, grasslands, and urban areas. This bat commonly roosts in rock crevices, cliff faces, and buildings.

Suitable habitat in the Biological Study Area is limited to hollowed trees, rocky outcrops, or structures, but no bat or evidence of bats (guano or urine staining) was found in or near the Biological Study Area.

Western Spadefoot Toad (Spea hammondi)

The western spadefoot toad inhabits washes, river floodplains, alluvial fans, alkali flats, and mountain foothills that contain gravelly soil with open vegetation and short grasses.

No evidence of the western spadefoot toad was found in the Biological Study Area during surveys, and no appropriate breeding habitat was present.

Waters and Wetlands

The action area falls within several U.S. Geological Survey-designated watershed boundaries, including the Upper Tule and Upper Kaweah subbasins. Within the Upper Tule subbasin, the action areas are in the Yokuhl Creek and Foothill Ditch-Outside Creek watersheds. Within the Upper Kaweah subbasin, the action areas are in the Dry Creek, Upper Cottonwood Creek, Horse Creek-Kaweah River and Upper Cross Creek subbasins.

Three potential aquatic resource types were found in the action area: perennial stream, intermittent stream, and ephemeral drainage. In addition, culverts and culvert extensions are present within the action area. A total of 0.037 acre of aquatic resources—represented by 0.004 acre of perennial drainage, 0.002 acre of intermittent stream, and 0.031 acre of ephemeral drainage—was identified in the action area.

Environmental Consequences

Special-Status Plant Species

No direct or indirect impacts to special-status plant species are anticipated from the project. Work will be confined mostly to the paved road surface, compacted shoulder areas, and very small areas around the inlets and outlets of existing culverts. No special-status species are known to be currently occupying areas within or right next to worksites. Pre-construction species surveys, environmentally sensitive area fencing, and biological monitoring, if necessary, will enable the project to avoid and minimize impacts to special-status species.

Special-Status Animal Species

No impacts are expected to these species, their habitat, or nests: American badger, Cooper's hawk, Crotch's bumblebee, northern goshawk, pallid bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, and western spadefoot toad.

No direct impacts to special-status animal species are anticipated from the project. Work will be confined mostly to the paved road surface, compacted shoulder areas, and very small areas around the inlets and outlets of existing culverts. No special-status species are known to be currently occupying areas within or right next to worksites. The most likely impacts will be from construction-related disturbances resulting from noise, vibration, vehicle activity, and the presence of work crews, which could cause animals to be

displaced from the work area. Pre-construction species surveys, nest-protection buffers, environmentally sensitive area fencing, and biological monitoring, if necessary, will enable the project to avoid and minimize impacts to special-status species.

Before construction begins, a qualified biologist will conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Training for all work personnel to inform them of the special-status species potentially within the work area, protective measures, reporting procedures, and consequences of violating environmental laws and permit requirements.

Waters and Wetlands

No wetlands are present within the project footprint. While several blue-line drainages are present within the overall vicinity of the project, no impacts to these waterways are anticipated. Work at drainages will be performed during no-flow conditions when possible. Culvert relining and minor repair work will have very minor, temporary impacts to waterways that will not involve fill or result in alterations to flow or carrying capacity. Culvert replacement work will result in impacts to waterways due to soil disturbance and the excavation of the culvert trench. No actions will result in diminished streamflow or altered flow patterns.

Some locations under this project are expected to fall under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

To ensure special-status or sensitive plant species have not come into the project area or in case they were undetectable during initial surveys, the following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed:

- A Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be performed by a qualified biologist for all work personnel to inform them of the special-status species potentially within the work area, protective measures, reporting procedures, and consequences of violating environmental laws and permit requirements.
- Focused botanical pre-construction surveys will be performed the flowering season prior to work at all work sites where ground disturbance is anticipated and suitable habitat for listed species exists.
- If populations of special-status plants are discovered in proximity to work sites, populations will be delineated and protected by an environmentally sensitive area buffer, clearly designated by high-visibility fencing or flagging.

- For any flowering populations discovered within a work site, immediately prior to any soil disturbance, the location of each population will be noted on a work site plan. The plants will then be excavated along with sufficient blocks of surrounding soil to maintain the intact root structure. The plants and soil will be placed in a safe location near the work site and kept moist. Upon completion of the work, the plants will be carefully replaced within or as close to their original location as possible.
- For work sites where construction begins after the flowering period, if special-status plant populations are discovered in the work site, the topsoil will be removed and stored safely near the work area and replaced after construction is finished to maintain the existing seed bank and ensure the continued growth of that population.

The following avoidance and minimization measure is proposed for animal species:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be performed by a qualified biologist for all work personnel to inform them of the special-status species potentially within the work area, protective measures, reporting procedures, and consequences of violating environmental laws and permit requirements.

The following avoidance and minimization measure is proposed for the American badger (*Taxidea taxus*):

- Pre-construction surveys will be performed within the Biological Study Area to determine if any badger denning is occurring. Active dens will be delineated and protected by an environmentally sensitive area buffer, clearly designated by high-visibility fencing or flagging.

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*):

- Pre-construction nesting surveys will be performed to ensure that no nesting Cooper's hawk will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.

If nesting pairs are identified within 500 feet of the project footprint, additional avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to avoid direct impacts. These measures include but are not limited to the following: environmentally sensitive area fencing enclosing the nest tree; a 500-foot buffer surrounding the nest; and a biological monitor present during construction activities that occur within this buffer. In addition, a special provision for migratory birds and nesting raptors (including Cooper's hawk) will be included in the construction contract to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction.

- Caltrans standard specifications requiring work lights to be directed only at the work area will be enforced throughout the project, including within nesting Cooper's hawk buffers should the species come into the project area.

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for Crotch's bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*):

- Pre-construction surveys will be performed to ensure that no Crotch's bumblebee has come into the Biological Study Area between publication of this document and the beginning of construction.

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*):

- Pre-construction nesting surveys will be performed to ensure that no nesting goshawks will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.
- If nesting pairs are identified within 500 feet of the project footprint, additional avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to avoid direct impacts. These measures include but are not limited to the following: environmentally sensitive area fencing enclosing the nest tree; a 500-foot buffer surrounding the nest; and a biological monitor present during construction activities that occur within this buffer. In addition, a special provision for migratory birds and nesting raptors (including northern goshawk) will be included in the construction contract to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction.
- Caltrans standard specifications requiring work lights to be directed only at the work area will be enforced throughout the project, including within nesting goshawk buffers should the species come into the project area.

The following avoidance and minimization measure is proposed for the pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*):

- Pre-construction surveys will be performed to ensure that no pallid bats are roosting in proximity to a work zone.

The following avoidance and minimization measure is proposed for the spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*):

- Pre-construction surveys will be performed to ensure that no spotted bats are roosting in proximity to a work zone.

The following avoidance and minimization measure is proposed for the western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*):

- Pre-construction surveys will be performed to ensure that no western mastiff bats are roosting in proximity to a work zone.

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for the western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*):

- Evening pre-construction surveys will be performed to ensure that no western spadefoot toad is present within a work zone.
- Caltrans standard specifications requiring work lights to be directed only at the work area will be enforced throughout the project.

Waters and Wetlands

The project will obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Compensatory mitigation in the form of an in-lieu fee credit purchase may be required as conditions of the permit.

The project will obtain a 404 Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The project will obtain a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife because the permit is required for impacts to natural channels, including ephemeral drainages.

[The following Cultural Resources section has been updated since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	No Impact
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	No Impact

Affected Environment

a) For details of cultural studies, please refer to the Historic Property Survey Report in Volume 2 (also available upon request—see the last page of this document).

The Area of Potential Effects for the project was established as areas that could be directly or indirectly affected by project activities and includes all of the existing right-of-way. The areas of direct effect consist of the project footprint, which includes areas of demolition, new construction and areas used for staging. The areas of indirect effect consider the maximum extent of visual, noise-related and vibration effects that project construction or implementation could have on cultural resources. The vertical Area of Potential Effects is based on the depth of anticipated excavation associated with construction. Depth of excavation for each culvert replacement is estimated to be about 5 feet.

No archaeological resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources have been recorded within the Area of Potential Effects. No new archaeological sites were discovered during walk-through surveys of the Area of Potential Effects in 2021.

One previously identified built environment resource—the Wutchumna Canal—crosses the Area of Potential Effects at post mile 6.39. A culvert replacement is scheduled for this area. A field survey of the culvert location found that the culvert proposed for replacement discharges into the Wutchumna Canal. Therefore, the Wutchumna Canal is being treated as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources due to the large size of the canal and limited potential for effects by project activities, pursuant to Stipulation VIII.C.4 of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

[The following section has been updated since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

Environmental Consequences

The area of indirect impact for the culvert work at the Wutchumna Canal is about 3,000 square feet; the direct impact will include about 450 square feet of the north side of the Wutchumna Canal bank. Work at this location includes replacing the existing 18-inch-diameter corrugated steel pipe culvert with a new 24-inch-diameter corrugated steel pipe culvert.

The Historic Property Survey Report with a Finding of No Adverse Effect (without standard conditions) was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer on November 7, 2022. The December 27, 2022, concurrence letter from the State Historic Preservation Officer is included in Appendix C.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is needed.

2.1.6 Energy

Construction activities will cause a temporary increase in energy consumption, but not significantly. Considering the information, the reasons provided, and guidance from the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference Chapter 13-Energy, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones Map, viewed at the California Department of Conservation website in August 2022, the information in the Water Quality Memorandum dated February 2021, and the Updated Paleontological Identification Report dated March 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. 	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change technical report dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	Less Than Significant Impact

Affected Environment

a, b) The project will repair or replace culverts at spot locations along State Route 245 in Tulare County. Within the project limits, State Route 245 is a conventional two-lane highway that begins in flat agricultural land and then gradually climbs into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not add capacity to the highway. There will be no increase in operational emissions because the project will repair or replace existing culverts. With the implementation of construction greenhouse gas reduction measures, impacts will be less than significant.

Construction greenhouse gas emissions for the project were calculated using Caltrans' Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET) v1.1. Project construction is expected to generate about 589 tons of carbon dioxide during the 200 working days required for construction.

While some construction greenhouse gas emissions will be unavoidable, implementing standard conditions or Best Management Practices designed to reduce or eliminate emissions as part of the project will reduce impacts to less than significant.

Measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include:

- Idling will be limited to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment.
- Recycled water is to be used where possible to reduce the amount of potable water used by construction activities.
- Improved fuel efficiency by construction equipment will be obtained by maintaining equipment in proper working condition, using the right-sized equipment for the job, and using equipment with new technologies when possible.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is needed.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated December 2020 and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	No Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	No Impact
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	No Impact

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Quality Memorandum dated February 2021 and the Location Hydraulic Study dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	No Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite;	No Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	No Impact
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	No Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	No Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering that the project will involve only the repair or replacement of existing culverts and that the project improvements will not affect the land use of properties next to the highway, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
a) Physically divide an established community?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	No Impact

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information found in the USMIN Mineral Deposit Database at the U.S. Geological Survey website, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	No Impact
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	No Impact

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Memorandum dated September 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	No Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	No Impact

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No Impact

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering that the project will not add capacity to the highway or acquire any new right-of-way, the following determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering that the project will not affect any government facilities or trigger the need for new facilities or government services, the following determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection?	No Impact
Police protection?	No Impact
Schools?	No Impact
Parks?	No Impact
Other public facilities?	No Impact

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering that the project will not affect parks or recreational facilities or trigger the need for more recreational facilities to be constructed, the following determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	No Impact
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	No Impact

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering that this maintenance project repairing existing culverts will not add capacity to the highway or reconfigure the roadway, the following determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	No Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	No Impact
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	No Impact

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	No Impact
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering that the project is a highway maintenance project repairing existing culverts and will not trigger the need for utilities and service systems, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps and information in the Climate Change technical report dated October 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	No Impact
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	No Impact
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	No Impact

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	No Impact

<p style="text-align: center;">Question:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance</p>
<p>b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No Impact</p>
<p>c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No Impact</p>

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



September 2022

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Tavares'.

TONY TAVARES
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment!"

Appendix B Comment Letters and Responses

This appendix has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from February 10, 2023, to March 13, 2023, retyped for readability. The comment letters are stated verbatim as submitted, with acronyms, abbreviations, and any original grammatical or typographical errors included. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented. Copies of the original comment letters and documents can be found in Volume 2 of this document.

A public notice in English and Spanish was posted in the *Visalia Times-Delta* on February 10, 2023. It stated the public review and comment period for the draft environmental document would run from February 10, 2023, to March 13, 2023, and offered the public an opportunity to request a public hearing. There were no requests for a public hearing during the public circulation period.

One comment was received during the circulation period: from the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit. The comment is presented below, followed by a Caltrans response.

Comment from the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit

Comment 1: The State Clearinghouse (SCH) would like to inform you that our office will transition from providing close of review period acknowledgement on your CEQA environmental document, at this time. During the phase of not receiving notice on the close of review period, comments submitted by State Agencies at the close of review period (and after) are available on CEQAnet. Please visit:
<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/Search/Advanced>

Filter for the SCH# of your project OR your “Lead Agency”

If filtering by “Lead Agency”

Select the correct project

Only State Agency comments will be available in the “attachments” section:
bold and highlighted

Thank you for using CEQA Submit.

Meng Heu

Office of Planning and Research

State Clearinghouse

Response to comment 1: Thank you for circulating the Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration for the Tulare 245 Culvert Rehabilitation Project and acknowledging Caltrans’ compliance with California Environmental Quality Act requirements pursuant to State Clearinghouse guidelines. Caltrans has recorded the corresponding State Clearinghouse number for this project.

Appendix C State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence Letter



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Armando Quintero, Director

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100
Telephone: (916) 445-7000 FAX: (916) 445-7053
calshpo.ohp@parks.ca.gov www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

December 27, 2022

VIA EMAIL

In reply refer to: FHWA_2022_1107_001
CATRA_2022_1107_001

Mr. David Price, Section 106 Coordinator
Caltrans Cultural Studies Office
Division of Environmental Analysis
1120 N Street, PO Box 942873, MS-27
Sacramento, CA 94273-0001

Subject: Finding of Effect for the Proposed Tulare 245 Culvert Rehabilitation Project in Tulare County, California

Dear Mr. Price:

Caltrans is continuing consultation regarding the above project in accordance with the January 1, 2014 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California* (106 PA) and *Memorandum of Understanding between the California Department of Transportation and the California State Historic Preservation Officer regarding Compliance with Public Resources Code Section 5024 and Governor's Executive Order W-26-92* (5024 MOU). As part of your documentation, Caltrans submitted a Historic Property Survey Report, Archaeological Survey Report and Finding of No Adverse Effect Report (FNAE) for the proposed project.

Caltrans, in cooperation with Tulare County, proposes to repair, replace, and clean 157 culverts and associated drainage elements in Tulare County on SR 245, at various locations, from Junction 198 (Post Mile [PM] 0.0) to the Tulare/Fresno County line (PM 33.0). Construction work will include repairing, replacing, or relining culverts with grading and embankment reconstruction where needed. For culverts with replacement proposed it is proposed that 9-to-36-inch pipes will be inserted 5 feet deep or less due to burial under sediment.

Caltrans identification efforts documented one historic property located within the area of potential effect for the project, the Wutchumna Canal. Caltrans is assuming eligibility of the property for the National Register of Historic Places for the purposes of this

Mr. Price
December 27, 2022
Page 2 of 2

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undertaking only under Criterion A at the local level with a period of significance of 1872-1962.

Caltrans applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect as defined in 36 CFR 800.5(a)(1) and found that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties. The proposed replacement of the culvert within the Canal at PM 6.4 will be completed in a manner that will ensure that the character defining features of the Wutchumna Canal will not be adversely affected.

Based on my review of the submitted documentation, I have no objections to Caltrans' finding of no adverse effect for this undertaking.

If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Lindquist at natalie.lindquist@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Memorandum, October 2022

Climate Change Memorandum, October 2022

Noise Memorandum, September 2022

Water Quality Memorandum, February 2021

Updated Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts), November 2022

Aquatic Resource Delineation Report, June 2022

Location Hydraulic Study, October 2022

Historical Property Survey Report, October 2022

Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment and Preliminary Site Investigation Summary, December 2020

Paleontological Identification Report, March 2022

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Javier Almaguer
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726

Or send your request via email to: javier.almaguer@dot.ca.gov

Or call: (559) 287-9320

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Tulare 245 Culvert Rehabilitation Project

General location information: On State Route 245, from the junction with State Route 198 to the Tulare/Fresno County line

District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-TUL-245-0.0/33.0

Project ID number: 0618000016

Project EA: 06-0X070