

Kern Bridge Repair Project

On State Routes 119 and 99 in Kern County

06-KER-119/99-PM 4.41, 4.65/26.78

Project ID Number 0620000068

State Clearinghouse Number 2023050642

Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

October 2023



General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: David Arredondo, Associate Environmental Planner

The Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration circulated to the public for 31 days between May 22, 2023, and June 22, 2023. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix C. 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.

Accessibility Assistance

Caltrans makes every attempt to ensure our documents are accessible. Due to variances between assistive technologies, there may be portions of this document that are not accessible. Where documents cannot be made accessible, we are committed to providing alternative access to the content. Should you need additional assistance, please contact us at the phone number in the box below.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: G. William "Trais" Norris III, District 6 Environmental Division, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726; 559-320-6045 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

State Clearinghouse Number 2023050642
06-KER-119/99-PM 4.41,4.65/26.78
Project ID Number 0620000068

Bridge abutment and footing repair on State Route 119 at post miles 4.41 and
4.65 and State Route 99 at post mile 26.78 in Kern County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration**

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission



Jennifer Lugo
Acting Office Chief, Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

11/16/2023

Date

The following individual can be contacted for more information about this document:

G. William "Trais" Norris III; 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726;
559-320-6045; trais.norris@dot.ca.gov



Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2023050642

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-KER-119/99-PM 4.41 and 4.65/26.78

EA/Project Number: EA 06-1A550 and Project ID Number 0620000068

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to repair two bridges along State Route 119 and one overpass bridge to State Route 99 in Kern County. Broad Creek Bridge (post mile 4.65) and Weed Creek Bridge (post mile 4.41) are on State Route 119, and Airport Drive Bridge (post mile 26.78) is on the southbound onramp to State Route 99. Repairing the bridges will consist of removing unsound concrete from bridge footings, replacing timber caps on abutments, and removing and replacing decayed timber abutments.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans, District 6. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measure will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

An Incidental Take Permit is expected for the San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel. The mitigation measure proposed for impacts to the San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel may include:

- Compensation for loss of habitat will be obtained through the purchase of credits from a mitigation bank, preservation of habitat, or enhancement or restoration of habitat per coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Lugo', is written over a horizontal line.

Jennifer Lugo
Acting Environmental Office Chief, Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

11/16/2023

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Proposed 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.....	5
1.4.1	Build Alternatives	5
1.4.2	No-Build (No-Action) Alternative	5
1.5	Identification of a Preferred Alternative.....	6
1.6	Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.....	6
1.7	Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion	7
1.8	Permits and Approvals Needed	7
Chapter 2	CEQA Evaluation.....	9
2.1	CEQA Environmental Checklist	9
2.1.1	Aesthetics	9
2.1.2	Agriculture and Forest Resources.....	10
2.1.3	Air Quality	11
2.1.4	Biological Resources.....	12
2.1.5	Cultural Resources.....	21
2.1.6	Energy.....	21
2.1.7	Geology and Soils	22
2.1.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	23
2.1.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	24
2.1.10	Hydrology and Water Quality	25
2.1.11	Land Use and Planning.....	26
2.1.12	Mineral Resources.....	27
2.1.13	Noise.....	27
2.1.14	Population and Housing.....	28
2.1.15	Public Services	28
2.1.16	Recreation	29
2.1.17	Transportation.....	29
2.1.18	Tribal Cultural Resources	29
2.1.19	Utilities and Service Systems.....	30
2.1.20	Wildfire.....	31
2.1.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance	32
Appendix A	Title VI Policy Statement.....	33
Appendix B	Federal Endangered Species Act Determinations	35
Appendix C	Comment Letters and Responses	37

Chapter 1 **Proposed Project**

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to repair two bridges along State Route 119 and one overpass bridge to State Route 99 in Kern County. Broad Creek Bridge (post mile 4.65) and Weed Creek Bridge (post mile 4.41) are on State Route 119, and Airport Drive Bridge (post mile 26.78) is on the southbound onramp to State Route 99. Repairing the bridges will consist of removing unsound concrete from the bridge footings, replacing timber caps on abutments, and removing and replacing decayed timber abutments.

The preliminary estimated construction cost of the project is \$250,000. The project will be funded by the 2020 State Highway Operation and Protection Program's Pavement Preservation Program in the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

Construction is slated to start in September 2024 and will take 90 working days to complete. Night work and road closures are planned for this project under the current project scope.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose and need sections discuss the reasons for the project and justify its development.

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to repair and maintain the bridge structures on State Route 99 at post mile 26.78 (Airport Drive Bridge) and State Route 119 at post mile 4.41 (Weed Creek) and post mile 4.65 (Broad Creek) in Kern County.

1.2.2 Need

Replacing and repairing the bridge structures is necessary to maintain the operational integrity of State Route 119 and State Route 99. Weed Creek Bridge and Broad Creek Bridge are experiencing backfill loss from under the asphalt concrete approach and will need to be replaced or repaired. Replacing and repairing the decayed timber members along the abutments and removing unsound concrete from the footings will stop the loss of backfill underneath the structure.

Airport Drive Bridge is experiencing footing erosion at columns 1 and 2 and will need to be repaired. Repairing the unsound concrete footings will protect columns 1 and 2 from further erosion.

1.3 Project Description

This project will repair two bridges along State Route 119 and one overpass bridge to State Route 99 in Kern County. Broad Creek Bridge (post mile 4.65) and Weed Creek Bridge (post mile 4.41) are on State Route 119, and Airport Drive Bridge (post mile 26.78) is on the southbound onramp to State Route 99. Repairing the bridges will consist of removing unsound concrete from the bridge footings, replacing timber caps on abutments, and removing and replacing decayed timber abutments.

See Figure 1-1 for the project vicinity map and Figure 1-2 for the project location map.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

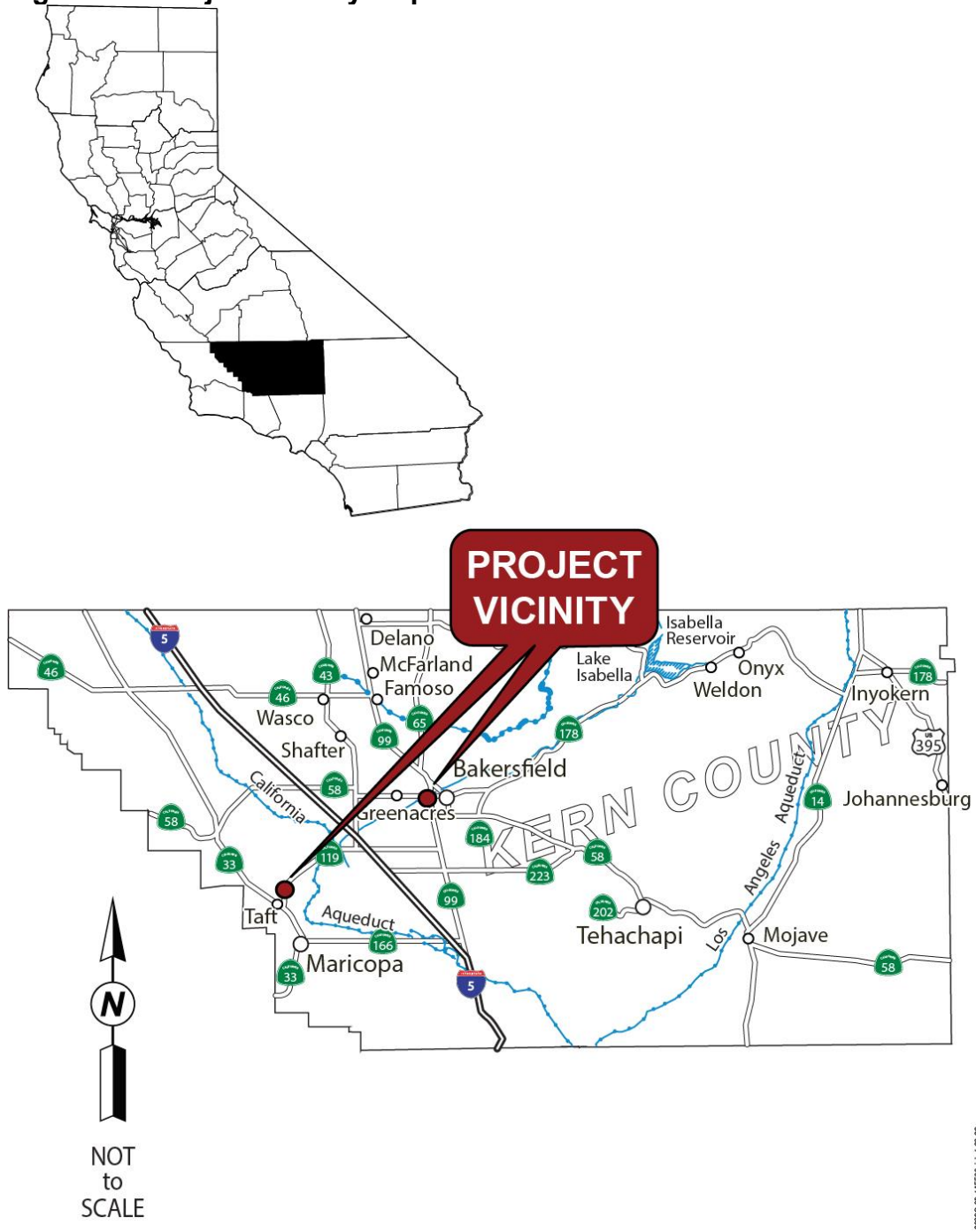
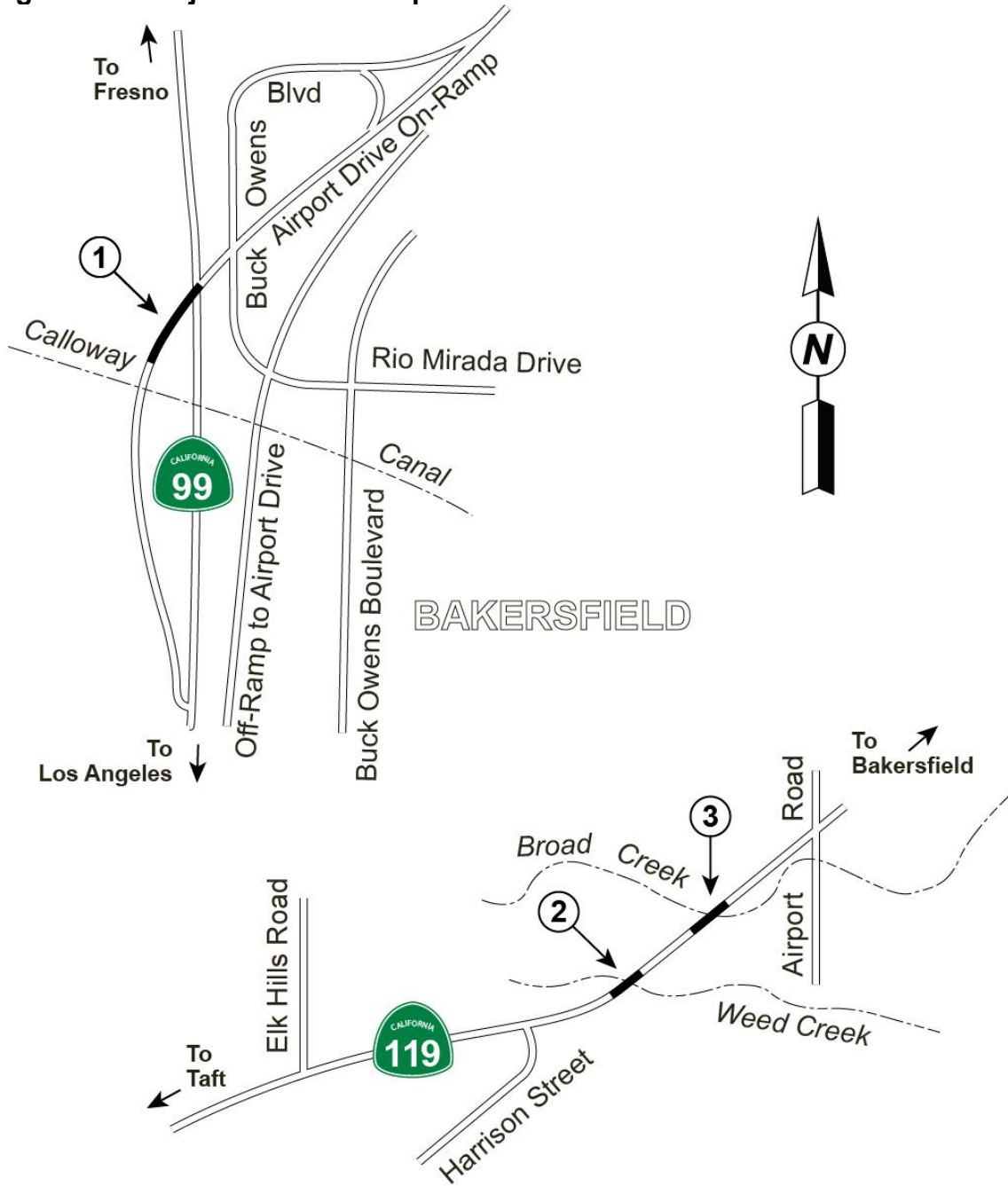


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



LOCATIONS OF CONSTRUCTION						
Location Number	County	Route	Post Mile	Structure Name	Bridge Number	Location Description
①	Kern	99	26.78	Airport Drive on Ramp	50-0266	0.1 Mile North of Calloway Canal
②	Kern	119	4.41	Weed Creek	50-0124	0.6 Miles East of Elk Hills Road
③	Kern	119	4.65	Broad Creek	50-0125	0.3 Miles West of Airport Road

Map Not to Scale

202006-05-1A5500_d1_10-25-20

1.4 Project Alternatives

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The build alternative will restore the three bridge structures to good condition by replacing the decayed timber along the abutments and repairing the unsound concrete footings identified within the project limits.

The project proposes work at three locations: Airport Drive Bridge (Bridge Number 50-0266) on State Route 99, Weed Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 50-0124) on State Route 119, and Broad Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 50-0125) on State Route 119.

Work on the Airport Drive Bridge will remove 3 inches of unsound concrete from the footings of columns 1 and 2 on bent 2 to expose rebar in the footings. The exposed footings will then be encased and replaced with 5 inches of concrete, covering the rebar of columns 1 and 2 of bent 2. A 25-foot-tall by 4-foot-wide temporary support will be placed next to bent 2 (in Calloway Canal) to allow work on bent 2 footings.

Work on Weed Creek Bridge will replace 15 timber plates on abutment 7 between the timber caps and the bottom of the girder. Temporary support will be placed no more than 6 feet from abutment 7, between abutment 7 and bent 6. Bent 2 will then have a new 13-foot treated lumber pile cap installed, spanning columns 2, 3, and 4.

Work on Broad Creek Bridge will replace the decayed portion of abutment 7 caps (under girders 21 and 22) with two plates. The lumber blocking at abutment 1 will have 12 new treated lumber pieces (2 inches by 12 inches by 24 inches) screwed into place to prevent further loss of backfill. The lumber blocking at abutment 7 will have 20 new treated lumber pieces of the same dimensions screwed into place. Abutment 1 and abutment 7 girders will be cleaned of debris and blocked off with new 2-by-12-by-24-inch treated lumber and screwed into place.

For all locations, the existing thermoplastic striping will be removed and replaced in kind. No new right-of-way is expected; however, construction easements may be needed. Construction work is expected to occur at night and require road closures.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will maintain the existing facility in its present condition. The No-Build Alternative will not address the unsound concrete bridge footings and decayed timber abutments of the existing bridges. The No-Build Alternative will not meet the purpose and need of the project.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

[Section 1.5, Identification of a Preferred Alternative, has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.] After the completion of the public review and comment period, the benefits and impacts of the Build Alternative versus the No-Build Alternative were compared.

The project development team identified the Build Alternative as the preferred alternative. The Build Alternative will satisfy the purpose and need of the project because it will remove and repair unsound concrete from bridge footings, replace timber caps on abutments, and remove and replace decayed timber abutments necessary to maintain the operational integrity of the existing bridges within the project limits.

The No-Build Alternative will not satisfy the purpose or need of the project because it will not address the backfill loss from unsound concrete bridge footings and decayed timber abutments underneath the structures.

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 Standard Special Provisions:

- 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) Earth Material Containing Lead
- 13-2 Water Pollution Control Program
- 13-4 Job Site Management
- 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.
- 14-6.03 Species Protection: Pertains to protecting regulated species and their habitats 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 and nesting-prevention measures may be used, as well as removing constructed and unoccupied nests.
- 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 Hazardous Waste and Contamination: Includes specifications relating to hazardous waste and contamination.
- 14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavating, transporting, and handling 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 see 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 stripes 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 stripes and pavement marking exposes workers to health hazards that must be addressed in a Lead Compliance Plan.
- 14-11.13C Safety and Health Protection Measures: Applies to worker protective measures for potential lead exposure.

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 will be 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Letter of Concurrence has been deleted, and the Army Corps of Engineers 404 Non-reporting Nationwide Permit and Regional Water Quality Control Board waste discharge requirement have been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

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	Caltrans will apply for a Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement during the project's design phase for Calloway Canal, Broad Creek, and Weed Creek.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	2081 Incidental Take Permit	Caltrans will apply for a Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit during the project's design phase.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Letter of Concurrence	Caltrans expects a letter of concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before the final environmental document is complete.
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Caltrans will apply for a Section 401 Water Quality Certification during the project's design phase for Calloway Canal.
Army Corps of Engineers	404 Non-reporting Nationwide Permit	Caltrans will apply for a Section 404 Non-reporting Nationwide Permit during the project's design phase for Calloway Canal.
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Waste discharge requirement	Caltrans will apply for a waste discharge requirement during the project's design phase for Broad Creek and Weed Creek.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed 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 proposed 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

During the scoping phase of the project, it was determined, based on the type of project, that a Scenic Resources Evaluation did not need to be prepared; therefore, 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 this 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 August 26, 2020, 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 Natural Environment Study dated March 9, 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 With Mitigation Incorporated
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?	No 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) For details of biological studies, please refer to the Natural Environment Study in Volume 2. See the List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2) for a list of other technical studies that are also available upon request.

See Appendix B for a list of Federal Endangered Species Act determinations for the project.

[The following text has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.] Under the current scope of the project, night work is expected, and road closures are required.

Special-Status Plant Species

The following special-status plant species have the potential to be in the study area but were not seen and are not expected to be present within the action area (the area that will be directly affected by the project, plus nearby areas that may be indirectly affected): Bakersfield cactus (federally endangered, state endangered, and California Native Plant Society List 1B.1), California jewelflower (federally endangered, state endangered, and California Native Plant Society List 1B.1), Kern mallow (federally endangered, California Native Plant Society List 1B.2), and the San Joaquin woollythread (federally endangered and California Native Plant Society List 1B.2).

None of the special-status plant species were seen during the several botanical surveys conducted throughout the growing season. However, these species could potentially be present within the action area.

Unlisted Plant Species

Although the following species are of special concern, they were not seen during botanical surveys. There is a moderate potential for these plants to grow in the project footprint.

Bakersfield smallscale

The Bakersfield smallscale is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.1 plant.

California screw moss

The California screw moss is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 4.2 plant.

Cottony buckwheat

The cottony buckwheat is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 4.2 plant.

Crownscale

The crownscale is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.2 plant.

Heartscale

The heartscale is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.2 plant.

Hoover's eriastrum

Hoover's eriastrum is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 4.2 plant.

Lost hills crownscale

The lost hills crownscale is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.2 plant.

Mason's neststraw

The Mason's neststraw is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.1 plant.

Oil neststraw

The oil neststraw is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.1 plant.

Recurved larkspur

The recurved larkspur is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.2 plant.

San Joaquin bluecurls

San Joaquin bluecurls are considered endangered but are not listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 4.2 plant.

Tejon poppy

The Tejon poppy is considered endangered but is not a listed species. The California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered plant inventory ranks this species as a List 1B.1 plant.

Focused botanical surveys of the Biological Study Area were completed in March 2021 and February 2022. No special status or unlisted plant species were seen during these surveys. Based on the highly disturbed nature of the Biological Study Area, in addition to Caltrans' routine maintenance activities of the Biological Study Area, it is unlikely for these species to be present in the project impact area.

Special-Status Animal Species

The following special-status animal species have the potential to be in the study area but were not seen and are not expected to be present within the action area (the area that will be directly affected by the project, plus nearby areas that may be indirectly affected): blunt-nosed leopard lizard (federally endangered and state endangered), Crotch's bumblebee (state endangered), giant kangaroo rat (federally endangered and state endangered), and the San Joaquin kit fox (federally endangered and state threatened).

Protocol-level small mammal trapping was performed within the project impact area in August and September 2021. The blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Crotch's bumblebee, giant kangaroo rat, and San Joaquin kit fox were not seen during these surveys. Based on the highly disturbed nature of the Biological Study Area, in addition to Caltrans' routine maintenance activities of the Biological Study Area, it is unlikely for these species to be present in the project impact area.

Due to the habitat that allscale scrub and annual grasslands provide in the Biological Study Area, the small mammal trapping captured one state-listed species: San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel (state threatened). A total of 12 were captured, measured, and released.

Unlisted Animal Species

Although the following species were not observed during surveys, the presence of allscale scrub and annual grasslands within the Biological Study Area provides potential habitat for these unlisted special-status animal species to be present in the project footprint. The American badger, Bakersfield legless lizard, burrowing owl, California glossy snake, LeConte's thrasher, San Joaquin coachwhip, Swainson's hawk, Tulare grasshopper mouse, and western spadefoot are California Species of Special Concern.

The short-nosed kangaroo rat was the only unlisted special-status animal species that was observed in the Biological Study Area.

Short-nosed kangaroo rat

The short-nosed kangaroo rat is a California species of special concern. This species was present during small mammal trapping surveys within the Biological Study Area from August to September 2021. A total of five short-nosed kangaroo rats were captured, measured, and released.

c) Waters and Wetlands

All flow lines in the Biological Study Area are intermittent and perennial creeks that run underneath State Route 119, where construction activities are proposed to occur. The Calloway Canal flows under the Airport Drive Bridge and will require work in the waterway. Both creeks receive water only from

precipitation and road runoff. The flow lines eventually become surface runoff, which flows into agricultural fields, fallow fields, or saltbush habitats.

Environmental Consequences

a) Special-Status and Unlisted Plant Species

No direct or indirect impacts to special-status and unlisted plant species are expected from this project. Work will be confined mostly to the channel underneath the bridge structures. No special-status plant species are known to be currently occupying areas within or right next to proposed worksites. Preconstruction plant species surveys, environmentally sensitive area fencing, and biological monitoring, if necessary, will enable the project to avoid and minimize impacts on special-status plant species.

Special-Status Animal Species

Potential temporary impacts will occur during soil disturbance, but no permanent impacts are expected on the following species or their habitats: blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Crotch's bumblebee, giant kangaroo rat, and San Joaquin kit fox.

Due to the presence of the San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel, a Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is expected to be needed. Compensation for loss of habitat will occur through the purchase of credits from a mitigation bank, preservation of habitat, or enhancement or restoration of habitat as identified through coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Work will be confined mostly to the channel underneath the bridge structures. No special-status animal species are known to be currently occupying areas within or right next to proposed 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. Preconstruction special-status animal species surveys, environmentally sensitive area fencing, and biological monitoring, if necessary, will enable the project to avoid and minimize impacts on special-status animal species.

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

[The following text has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

Several species are nocturnal within the project limits. The industrial lights that would be used at the project site during night work can become an issue

for these nocturnal species by making them more visible to their prey, essentially making it less likely for them to catch food. With increased visibility in the area, these nocturnal species can also become more susceptible to predators themselves. Night work also has the potential to affect their dispersal patterns, as they may avoid the illuminated work areas if they were to occur onsite.

Unlisted Animal Species

No impacts are expected to the following unlisted special-status animal species or their habitats: The American badger, Bakersfield legless lizard, burrowing owl, California glossy snake, LeConte's thrasher, San Joaquin coachwhip, Swainson's hawk, Tulare grasshopper mouse, and western spadefoot.

Work will be confined mostly to the channel underneath the bridge structures. No unlisted animal species are known to be currently occupying areas within or right next to proposed 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. Preconstruction animal species surveys, environmentally sensitive area fencing, and biological monitoring, if necessary, will enable the project to avoid and minimize impacts on special-status species.

Before construction begins, a qualified biologist will conduct 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.

With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, no cumulative effects will occur to the aforementioned special-status species.

c) Waters and Wetlands

No riparian or wetland habitat was present in the Biological Study Area or within the aquatic resource study area. No aquatic animals were seen in the Biological Study Area.

While all flow lines in the Biological Study Area are intermittent and perennial creeks that run underneath State Route 119, where construction activities are proposed to occur, no impacts to these waterways are proposed or expected.

Some locations proposed for work under this project are expected to fall under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Regional Water Quality Control Board as ephemeral to intermittent natural drainages as Waters of the U.S.

The project will also obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The project will obtain a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement because this permit is required for impacts to natural channels, including ephemeral drainages. However, mitigation under a 1602 permit is typically required only for permanent impacts to jurisdictional channels, and no permanent impacts are expected at this time.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for plant species:

- A qualified biologist will conduct Worker Environmental Awareness Training for all work personnel to inform them of the special-status plant species potentially within the work area, protective measures, reporting procedures, and consequences of violating environmental laws and permit requirements.
- Focused botanical preconstruction surveys will be performed during the flowering season before construction starts at worksites where ground disturbance is expected and suitable habitat for listed species exists.
- If the Kern mallow or Bakersfield cactus is discovered during focused botanical preconstruction surveys or construction, Caltrans will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as needed, to determine the best plan of action to avoid impacts.

The following avoidance and minimization measures are proposed for animal species:

- A qualified biologist will conduct 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.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitats that may contain potential special-status animal species.
- Any observations of the species discussed in the previous section will be uploaded to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's online California Natural Diversity Database.
- This avoidance and minimization measure has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated. Any artificial non-stationary lighting will be directed toward the work area to limit exposure to nearby habitats and potential species during work activities.
- Active San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel burrows will be marked with a pin flag and avoided with a 50-foot-wide buffer area, where possible.

- Exclusionary trapping will occur until no San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrels are captured for three consecutive days.
- If avoidance is not possible, a biological monitor with a current San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel handling permit will excavate the burrow by hand.
- For blunt-nosed leopard lizards, protocol-level surveys will be conducted during the survey season before work starts.
- Any observations of blunt-nosed leopard lizards will be uploaded to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's online California Natural Diversity Database. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also be notified.
- If burrowing owls are seen, the known burrows will be flagged and avoided by 160 feet during the nonbreeding season and 250 feet during the breeding season. If work must occur within the buffer, a biological monitor will be present onsite for work that occurs in the buffer.
- If a Crotch's bumblebee nest is observed, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be contacted to provide guidance on how to proceed.
- Preconstruction surveys for giant kangaroo rats, such as trapping, will occur to ensure no new signs of giant kangaroo rats are present within the exclusionary fencing.
- Exclusionary fencing for giant kangaroo rats will be installed around the proposed work area. Exclusionary trapping will occur and continue until three consecutive nights of empty traps have been reached.
- Before the start of ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed at the limit of the project impact area at all culverts that contain suitable San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel habitat. Environmentally sensitive area fencing installation and removal will be monitored by a biological monitor or biologist approved by Caltrans, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- A preconstruction visual survey will be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days before the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities for all habitats within the project impact area that could support special-status animal species. If any special-status animal species are present within the project impact area, work will stop, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be contacted. To the greatest extent practicable, efforts will be made to avoid the species' potential habitat.
- Preconstruction/pre-activity surveys will be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days before the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San

Joaquin kit fox. Camera stations will be set up at potential dens in the project impact area.

- Project-related vehicles will observe a daytime speed limit of 20 miles per hour throughout the site in all project areas except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that special-status species could be run over by vehicles and equipment.
- All steep-walled trenches or excavations deeper than 12 inches will include escape ramps. At least one escape ramp will be provided in any onsite trenches or excavations at no more than a 2-to-1 slope. Such trenches or excavations will be inspected for wildlife immediately before backfilling.
- Any holes, trenches, or excavations without escape ramps that will not be filled within the working day must be covered overnight and inspected before beginning work on the following day.
- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during project construction, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 2 feet deep will be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they will be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.
- Food trash and other garbage that may attract wildlife to the work area will be disposed of in closed containers and removed at the end of each workday. Feeding wildlife will be prohibited.
- All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of 4 inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods will be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before they are used or moved in any way.
- Use of rodenticides and herbicides in project areas will be restricted.
- Firearms, except those carried by qualified and permitted public safety agents, and pets will not be permitted on the worksite.
- If natal/pupping dens are discovered within the project area or 200 feet of the project impact area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be immediately notified.
- Proposed buffers may include a 250-foot-wide no-disturbance buffer to be established around natal dens, a 150-foot-wide no-disturbance buffer around known dens, and a 50-foot-wide no-disturbance buffer around potential or atypical dens. Disturbance to all San Joaquin kit fox dens will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
- To the extent possible, a biologist will be available on-call during all construction periods when not present onsite.

The following mitigation measure is proposed for the San Joaquin (Nelson’s) antelope squirrel:

- Compensation for loss of habitat will be obtained through the purchase of credits from a mitigation bank, preservation of habitat, or enhancement or restoration of habitat as identified through coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Waters and Wetlands

The project will obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The project will also obtain a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement because this permit is required for impacts to natural channels, including ephemeral drainages. However, because no permanent impacts to 1602 jurisdictional channels are expected, no compensatory mitigation is proposed.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information provided in the screening memorandum dated August 17, 2020, 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?	No 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

2.1.6 Energy

Considering that the project will repair bridge structures, 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
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 <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/eqzapp/> and <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=landslides> on November 18, 2021, the information included in the Water Quality Memorandum dated March 16, 2022, and the Paleontological Identification Report dated January 31, 2022, 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: 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
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: iv) Landslides?	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
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 March 15, 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) This project will repair bridge structures on State Route 119 and State Route 99 in Kern County. The main purpose of the routes is to serve local agricultural and petroleum production-related traffic needs and provide a corridor for truck traffic.

Environmental Consequences

a, b) This project will not add capacity to the highway. There will be no increase in operational emissions because the project will repair bridge

structures. 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 335 tons of carbon dioxide during 90 working days.

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.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include the following:

- Limit idling to five minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment.
- Encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment.
- Construction Environmental Training: Supplement existing training with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- Lower the rolling resistance of highway surfaces as much as possible while still maintaining design and safety standards.
- Earthwork Balance: Reduce the need to transport earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- Reduce the need for electric lighting by using ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights.

No mitigation is needed.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated March 17, 2022, the Noise Compliance Memorandum dated August 26, 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 0.25 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 2 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 March 16, 2022, and the Location Hydraulic Study signed June 13, 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 repair bridge structures and the fact that the 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 that the project will not acquire any new right-of-way, 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 August 26, 2020, 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
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 2 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 built, 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 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 screening memorandum dated August 17, 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Will 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 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 stormwater 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
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 March 15, 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
<p>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?</p>	<p>No Impact</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>No Impact</p>
<p>c) Does the project have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>	<p>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.



TONY TAVARES
Director

“Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment”

Appendix B Federal Endangered Species Act Determinations

Species	Scientific Name	Status	Federal Endangered Species Act Determination
Buena Vista Lake ornate shrew	<i>Sorex ornatus relictus</i>	Federally Endangered	No effect
Giant kangaroo rat	<i>Dipodomys ingens</i>	Federally Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
San Joaquin kit fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	Federally Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
Tipton kangaroo rat	<i>Dipodomys nitratooides</i>	Federally Endangered	No effect
California condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	Federally Endangered	No effect
Blunt-nosed leopard lizard	<i>Gambelia sila</i>	Federally Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
Giant garter snake	<i>Thamnophis gigas</i>	Federally Threatened	No effect
Green sea turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Federally Threatened	No effect
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	Federally Threatened	No effect
Delta smelt	<i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>	Federally Threatened	No effect
Monarch butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Candidate	No effect
Vernal pool fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	Federally Threatened	No effect
Bakersfield cactus	<i>Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei</i>	Federally Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
Kern mallow	<i>Eremalche parryi</i> spp. <i>kernensis</i>	Federally Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect

Appendix C Comment Letters and Responses

[Appendix C, Comment Letters and Responses, has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.]

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from May 22, 2023, to June 22, 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 was published in English and Spanish in The Bakersfield Californian on May 22, 2023. Both newspaper publications stated the public comment period ran from May 22, 2023, to June 22, 2023, and offered the public an opportunity to request a public hearing.

There were no requests for a public hearing during public circulation. Two comments were received. One from the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit and one from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (see below). A Caltrans response follows each comment.

Comment from the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit

Comment 1:

Your project is published and is available for review. Please note the State/Local review 'start' and 'end' period.

You can click "Navigation" and select "Published Document" to view your project and any attachments on CEQAnet.

****Updates to Published Projects:** Please note that we do not remove attachments from published projects unless there is confidential information that cannot be displayed online. To make changes to a published document, send requests and any attachments to state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov. We ask that you also provide a brief memo on lead agency letterhead explaining what changes/corrections have been made.

Thank you,

Meng Heu

Office of Planning and Research (OPR)

State Clearing House

****Note:** No reply, response, or information provided constitutes legal advice.

To view your submission, use the following link.
<https://ceqasubmit.opr.ca.gov/document/index/288191/1>

Response to Comment 1:

Thank you for circulating the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Kern Bridge Repair 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. No comments were received from any individual, only one state agency commented for this project.

Comments from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Dear Trais Norris:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received an Initial Study from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as Lead Agency, for the Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

If you have any questions, please contact Mindy Trask, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), at the address provided on this letterhead, by telephone at (559) 939-0282, or by electronic mail at mary.trask@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Vance

Regional Manager

Response to comments from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife:

Comment 1: San Joaquin kit fox (SJKF)

Issue: The Project site is within the known geographic range of SJKF, and multiple historical and recent occurrences have been documented in the region, including within the urban limits of Taft (CDFW 2023). Based on lack of observations during field surveys and disturbed habitat conditions, the Initial Study concluded that the proposed project would not impact SJKF. However, SJKF population sizes are known to fluctuate over time, and absence in any one year does not necessarily indicate a negative finding. In addition to native habitats, SJKF are also known to den in right of ways, vacant lots, parks, landscaped areas, golf courses, oil fields, etc. Further, SJKF may be attracted to the Project site due to the type and level of ground-disturbing activities and the loose, friable soils resulting from intensive ground disturbance and night work. If present within or near the Project site, Project activities have the potential to significantly impact local SJKF populations.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for SJKF:

Due to the abundance of SJKF in the Project vicinity, the limited utility of general “presence/absence” surveys, and the likelihood that SJFK will be attracted to project construction activities, CDFW recommends that Caltrans assume presence of SJKF in the Project area and apply for take authorization through the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b). CDFW has no other comments on the avoidance and minimization measures for San Joaquin kit fox in the Initial Study.

Response to Comment 1: During initial surveys, no signs of San Joaquin kit foxes were observed in the work area. Based on the scope of work and the limited time expected for work to occur, Caltrans does not anticipate the risk of take to San Joaquin kit foxes as a result of the project. However, Caltrans will reassess the work area before construction during the permitting phase and reassess if an incidental take permit would be warranted.

Comment 2: Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard (BNLL)

Issue: The Project site is within the known geographic range of BNLL, and multiple historical and recent occurrences have been documented in the region (CDFW 2023). BNLL is currently fully protected and, therefore, no “take” incidental or otherwise can be authorized by CDFW. Suitable BNLL habitat includes all areas of grassland and shrub scrub habitat that contains required habitat elements, such as small mammal burrows. BNLL are also known to utilize open space patches between suitable habitats including disturbed sites and unpaved access roadways. Although BNLL was not found during protocol surveys in support of the Initial Study, the Project area is within range of suitable BNLL habitat and could potentially occupy burrows that extend underground into the Project area. Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for BNLL, potentially significant impacts associated with ground-disturbing activities include burrow collapse, nest abandonment, reduced nest success, reduced health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for BNLL:

CDFW recommends focused surveys following the 2019 survey methodology titled “Approved Survey Methodology for the Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard” to detect any BNLL that may occur in the Project area (CDFW 2019). These surveys, the parameters of which were designed to optimize detectability, must be conducted within one year from the start of Project activities to assure CDFW that take of this fully protected species will not occur because of Project implementation. It is important to note that protocol level surveys must be conducted on multiple dates during late spring, summer, and fall, of the same survey season, and that within these time periods there are specific date, temperature, and time parameters which must be adhered to. As a

result, protocol level surveys for this species are not synonymous with 30-day “pre-construction” surveys often recommended for other wildlife species.

CDFW advises that all potential burrows, which could be occupied by BNLL, and all individuals observed above-ground be avoided. CDFW also recommends that suitable burrows within and adjacent to potential habitat for BNLL be avoided by a minimum 50 feet in all areas where ground disturbing Project activities will occur, that an appropriate number of qualified biologists be present during all ground-disturbing Project activities to ensure that BNLL above ground are not impacted, and that any individual that may enter the Project activity area be allowed to leave unobstructed on its own. If BNLL is detected, consultation with CDFW would be warranted to discuss how to implement the Project and avoid take.

Response to Comment 2: Caltrans will conduct additional protocol surveys for blunt-nosed leopard lizards the season before construction. If blunt-nosed leopard lizards are found to be present onsite, Caltrans will work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine appropriate measures to avoid take of this species.

Comment 3: Burrowing Owl (BUOW)

Issue: The Project site is within the known range of BUOW and based on our review of aerial imagery, BUOW has the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project site. BUOW inhabit open grassland or adjacent canal banks, rights-of-ways, vacant lots, containing small mammal burrows, a requisite habitat feature used by BUOW for nesting and cover (Gervais et al. 2008). BUOW rely on burrow habitat year-round for their survival and reproduction.

Habitat loss and degradation are considered the greatest threats to BUOW in California (Gervais et al. 2008). Potentially significant direct impacts associated with Project activities include burrow collapse, inadvertent entrapment, nest abandonment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals. In addition, and as described in CDFW’s “Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation” (CDFG 2012), excluding and/or evicting BUOW from their burrows is considered a potentially significant impact under CEQA. Construction activities near active burrows could result in potentially significant impacts to nesting or overwintering owls.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for BUOW:

CDFW advises that a qualified biologist assess if suitable BUOW habitat features are present within 500 feet of the Project site (e.g., burrows) the year prior to Project construction. If suitable habitat features are present, CDFW recommends assessing presence/absence of BUOW by having a qualified

biologist conduct surveys following guidelines by the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (CBOC 1993) and CDFW (CDFG 2012). Specifically, CBOC and CDFW recommend three or more surveillance surveys conducted during daylight with each visit occurring at least three weeks apart during the peak breeding season (April 15 to July 15), when BUOW are most detectable.

CDFW recommends no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the “Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation” (CDFG 2012), be implemented prior to and during any ground-disturbing activities. Specifically, CDFW’s Staff Report recommends that impacts to occupied burrows be avoided in accordance with the following table unless a qualified biologist approved by CDFW verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.

Location	Time of Year	Low Level of Disturbance (In Meters)	Medium Level of Disturbance (In Meters)	High Level of Disturbance (In Meters)
Nesting sites	April 1-Aug 15	200	500	500
Nesting sites	Aug 16-Oct 15	200	200	500
Nesting sites	Oct 16-Mar 31	50	100	500

Response to Comment 3: Before construction, a qualified biologist will reassess the bridge locations for the potential presence of burrowing owls. If burrowing owls are found to be present, Caltrans will implement an appropriate no-disturbance buffer.

Comment 4: Special Status Bats

Issue: The Initial Study did not provide an assessment of potential impacts to special status or other bats and suitable roosting habitat is present for bats within and near the Project site. Pallid, Townsend’s big-eared, spotted and western red bats may roost in a variety of natural and man-made habitats that are present in the Project area, including trees, cliffs, and man-made structures such as buildings, bridges and culverts. Bats are particularly more likely to utilize man-made structures even near busy highways and urban areas when natural habitat is limited, such as in the Project vicinity. Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for bats, Project activities may result in potentially significant impacts to roosting or maternal bats, including potential inadvertent entrapment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for Bats:

CDFW advises that a qualified biologist conduct focused surveys for bats and potential roosting habitat within 400 feet of the Project site prior to Project

activities. Avoidance whenever possible is encouraged via delineation and observance of no-disturbance buffers according to activity and species, as recommended in Table 7-1 of “Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions” (H. T. Harvey & Associates 2021), ranging from 100 feet to 400 feet. If roosting bats are observed on the Project site and buffer areas, CDFW recommends that Caltrans stop work in the buffer area and coordinate with CDFW for site-specific impact minimization recommendations. To mitigate for potential Project impacts on bats, CDFW encourages Caltrans to incorporate bat habitat into the Project design.

Response to Comment 4: Before construction, Caltrans will reevaluate all three bridges for the presence of bats within the Caltrans right-of-way and where Caltrans has the legal authority to do so.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Memorandum
Noise Memorandum
Energy Analysis Memorandum
Water Quality Memorandum
Natural Environment Study
Location Hydraulic Study
Cultural Screening Memorandum
Initial Site Assessment
Paleontological Identification Report
Climate Change Technical Report

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

G. William "Trais" Norris III
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726

Or send your request via email to: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 559-320-6045

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Kern Bridge Repair Project
General Location Information: On State Route 119 and State Route 99 in Kern County
District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-KER-119, 99-PM 4.41, 4.65/26.78
Project ID number: 0620000068