

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

To: Governor's Office of Planning and Research -
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth St, Suite 222
Sacramento, CA 95814-5502

From: South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Project Title: Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan for 1997 8-Hour Ozone Standard

Project Location: The proposed project is located in the Coachella Valley portion, excluding tribal lands, of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) jurisdiction. The Coachella Valley consists of the Riverside County portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Coachella Valley was reclassified from Severe-15 to Extreme nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (standard) with an attainment date of June 15, 2024. To address the requirement by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to submit a revised State Implementation Plan by February 14, 2021, South Coast AQMD has developed the Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan to demonstrate how attainment of 1997 8-hour ozone standard will be achieved as expeditiously as possible and by June 15, 2024 by: 1) including new information on the current air quality status; 2) updating the emissions inventory and the air quality modeling analysis for demonstrating attainment; 3) evaluating control strategies and emission reductions needed for attainment including Reasonably Available Control Technology and Reasonably Available Control Measures and the impact of existing and recently adopted rules and regulations by South Coast AQMD and California Air Resources Board (CARB); and 4) addressing other federal Clean Air Act requirements such as a Reasonable Further Progress demonstration. The Coachella Valley is expected to attain the 1997 8-hour ozone standard in 2023 based on the continued implementation of existing regulations and programs by the South Coast AQMD and CARB.

Public Agency Approving Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Agency Carrying Out Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Exempt Status:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption

CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

Reasons why project is exempt: South Coast AQMD, as Lead Agency, has reviewed the proposed project pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Since the proposed project relies on the continued implementation of existing regulations and programs by the South Coast AQMD and CARB to reduce emissions without proposing new requirements that would involve physical changes, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment, because the proposed project is designed to further protect or enhance the environment by demonstrating how attainment with the 1997 8-hour ozone standard for the Coachella Valley will be achieved. Further, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the proposed project.

Date of Project Approval: South Coast AQMD Governing Board Hearing: December 4, 2020

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------|
| CEQA Contact Person: | Phone Number: | Email: | Fax: |
| Kendra Reif | (909) 396-2492 | kreif@aqmd.gov | (909) 396-3982 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------|
| Plan Contact Person: | Phone Number: | Email: | Fax: |
| Jong Hoon Lee | (909) 396-3903 | jhlee@aqmd.gov | (909) 396-3324 |

Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature: _____



Barbara Radlein
Program Supervisor, CEQA
Planning, Rule Development, and Area Sources