

# Calaveras County Bridge Replacement

On State Route 12 in Calaveras County near San Andreas

10-CAL-12-PM 17.1-17.5

Project Number 1013000008

**Initial Study  
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**Volume 1 of 2**



Prepared by the  
State of California Department of Transportation

**December 2021**



## General Information About This Document

### ***What's in this document:***

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project in Calaveras County in California. The document explains why the project is being proposed, the alternatives being considered for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

### ***What you should do:***

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 10 office at 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205 and the Calaveras County Library at 1299 Gold Hunter Road San Andreas, California 95249.
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Jaycee Azevedo, District 10 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205. Submit comments via email to: [Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov).
- Submit comments by the deadline: March 4, 2022.

### ***What happens next:***

After comments are received from the public and the reviewing agencies, Caltrans may 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, 2) do additional environmental studies, or 3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

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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: Jaycee Azevedo, District 10 Environmental Division, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205; 209-992-9824 (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.

Replace North Fork Calaveras River Bridge next to its current alignment, and  
realign State Route 12 from post miles 17.1 to 17.5 in Calaveras County

**INITIAL STUDY  
with Proposed 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



(Benjamin Broyles for)

James P. Henke  
Environmental Office Chief, District 10  
California Department of Transportation  
CEQA Lead Agency

12/29/2021

Date

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

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95205; 209-992-9824





**DRAFT**

## **Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

**District-County-Route-Post Mile:** 10-CAL-12-PM 17.1-17.5

**EA/Project Number:** EA 10-0X740 and Project Number 1013000008

### **Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to replace the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge on an alternate alignment along State Route 12 in Calaveras County. The current bridge has above-average collision rates and nonstandard bridge railings, width, superelevation, and horizontal alignment. The proposed replacement bridge would have two 12-foot lanes, two 8-foot shoulders, and new bridge railings to meet current standards. The project would also involve roadway realignment next to the north side of the existing bridge and would correct the existing nonstandard horizontal roadway alignment at the west and east ends of the structure.

### **Determination**

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans, District 10.

On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- The project would compensate for the removal of valley oak trees and riparian vegetation and impacts to Waters of the State through tree replanting onsite or offsite.
- The project would compensate for impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. through participation in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sacramento District California In-Lieu Fee Program.

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James P. Henke  
Environmental Office Chief, District 10  
California Department of Transportation

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Date



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# **Chapter 1**      Proposed Project

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## **1.1 Introduction**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Caltrans proposes to replace the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge on State Route 12 in Calaveras County north of its current alignment. State Route 12 would be realigned to match the new bridge alignment. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 show the project vicinity and location maps.

## **1.2 Purpose and Need**

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to provide the traveling public with an up-to-standard crossing over the North Fork Calaveras River on State Route 12 in Calaveras County.

### **1.2.2 Need**

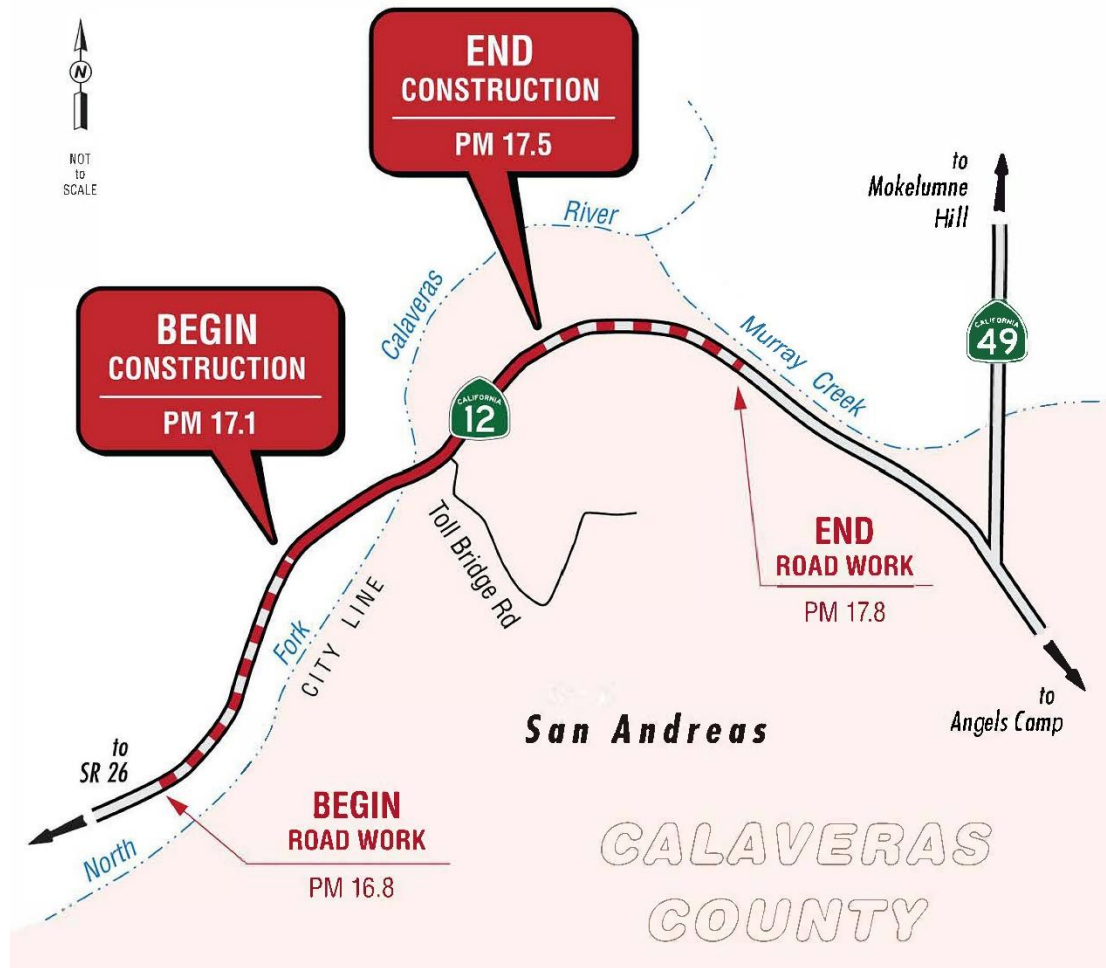
The project is needed because the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge has been identified by the Caltrans Office of Structures Maintenance and Investigations as having exceeded its design life expectancy and not meeting current standards.

## **1.3 Project Description**

Caltrans proposes to replace the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge on an alternate alignment along State Route 12 in Calaveras County from post miles 17.1 to 17.5. The current bridge has above-average collision rates and nonstandard bridge railings, width, superelevation, and horizontal alignment. The proposed replacement bridge would have two 12-foot lanes, two 8-foot shoulders, and new bridge railings to meet current standards. The project would also realign the roadway next to the north side of the existing bridge and correct the existing nonstandard horizontal roadway alignment at the west and east ends of the structure.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map



**Figure 1-2 Project Location Map**

## 1.4 Project Alternatives

The project has two alternatives—a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

### 1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The project is in Calaveras County on State Route 12 at the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge (Bridge Number 30-0007), located about 1.8 miles northwest of the unincorporated census-designated town of San Andreas. The roadway realignment extends from post miles 17.1 to 17.5, with the bridge limits located from post miles 17.25 to 17.3.

The new bridge is expected to consist of a multi-span structure with abutments and multi-column piers. It would include new piers and a new substructure with a deck width of 44 feet. The new bridge would have eight-foot-wide standard shoulders on either side of the traveled way. New bridge

transition railings and terminal sections would be installed at the four corners of the proposed bridge rails to meet current standards. The road at each end of the bridge in both northbound and southbound directions of the highway would also be widened to include new eight-foot-wide standard shoulders.

The proposed work includes staged construction with long, one-way traffic control with temporary traffic signals for the duration of the construction. Half of the bridge would be built to allow the other half of the bridge to remain open for traffic. Access to and work within the creek channel would be required for the foundation construction, falsework construction, and removal operations. Cofferdams would be required for water diversion to ensure dry working conditions.

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 proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives.”

#### **1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative would leave the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge in its current condition. The bridge has above-average collision rates and nonstandard bridge railings, width, superelevation, and horizontal alignment. These issues are likely to worsen over time as the bridge ages further past its design life expectancy. As such, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project.

### **1.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion**

Other project alternatives were considered but eliminated due to cost concerns or because they did not meet the project’s purpose and need. The original project design would have replaced three bridges, including the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge, the Calaveritas Creek Bridge, and the Angels Creek Bridge. Due to cost concerns, the scope was later cut down to only include the replacement of the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge, with a recommendation that the other two bridge replacements be programmed as different projects.

The project development team then considered widening the existing bridge and upgrading the bridge rail instead of replacing it but rejected this alternative due to the age of the existing structure and the above-average collision rates associated with the nonstandard alignment. The team then decided to replace the bridge on a different alignment to straighten State Route 12, which would have replaced the aging structure, built shoulders and

bridge rails, and potentially reduced collision rates; this became our current Build Alternative.

## **1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives**

The following Best Management Practices would be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- SS-1 Scheduling
- SS-2 Preservation of Existing Vegetation
- SS-3 Hydraulic Mulch
- SS-4 Hydroseeding
- SS-5 Soil Binders
- SS-6 Straw Mulch
- SS-7 Temporary Cover and Rolled Erosion Control Products
- SS-8 Wood Mulching
- SS-10 Outlet Protection/Velocity Dissipation Devices
- SS-12 Streambank Stabilization
- SC-1 Silt Fence
- SC-6 Gravel Bag/Earthen Berm
- SC-7 Street Sweeping
- SC-8 Sandbag Barrier
- SC-9 Straw Bale Barrier
- SC-10 Temporary Drainage Inlet Protection
- SC-11 Compost Sock
- SC-12 Flexible Sediment Barrier
- TC-1 Temporary Construction Entrance/Exit
- NS-1 Water Conservation Practices
- NS-2 Dewatering Operations
- NS-3 Paving, Sealing, Sawcutting, and Grinding Operations
- NS-5 Clear Water Diversion
- NS-6 Illegal Connection and Illicit Discharge Detection and Reporting
- NS-8 Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning
- NS-9 Vehicle and Equipment Fueling

- NS-10 Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance
- NS-11 Pile Driving Operations
- NS-12 Concrete Curing
- NS-13 Material and Equipment Use Over Water
- NS-14 Concrete Finishing
- NS-15 Structure Demolition/Removal Over or Adjacent to Water
- WM-1 Material Delivery and Storage
- WM-2 Material Use
- WM-3 Stockpile Management
- WM-4 Spill Prevention and Control
- WM-5 Solid Waste Management
- WM-6 Hazardous Waste Management
- WM-7 Contaminated Soil Management
- WM-8 Concrete Waste Management
- WM-9 Sanitary and Septic Waste Management
- WM-10 Liquid Waste Management

The following measures from the 2018 Caltrans Standard Specifications would also be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- Section 4-1.13 (Scope of Work—Cleanup)
- Section 7-1.02M(2) (Fire Prevention)
- Section 10-5 (Dust Control)
- Section 13 (Water Pollution Control)
- Section 14-1.02 (Environmentally Sensitive Areas)
- Section 14-6.03A (Species Protection)
- Section 14-6.03B (Bird Protection)
- Section 14-6.03D (Contractor-Supplied Biologist)
- Section 14-8 (Noise Control)
- Section 14-9.02 (Air Pollution Control)
- Section 14-11.03 (Hazardous Waste Management)
- Section 20-1.03C(3) (Weed Control)
- Section 21-2.02F (Seed)
- Section 48-2 (Falsework)
- Sections 51-1.03C(2) and 51-2.01B (Concrete Structures)

## **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 (NEPA). 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
State Historic Preservation Office	Concurrence on Finding of No Historic Properties Affected	Concurrence would be obtained before the final environmental document is completed.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Biological Opinion/Letter of Concurrence in response to Biological Assessment	Response to Biological Assessment would be obtained before the final environmental document is completed.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit for Placement of Fill	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act Section 401: Water Quality Certification	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602: Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.



# Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

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## 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 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

Considering the information in the Scenic Resources Evaluation dated October 26, 2021, the following significance 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?	<b>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<b>No Impact</b>

### ***Affected Environment***

The project is in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The area features annual grasslands and valley foothill riparian vegetation communities near State Route 12 and the Calaveras River. However, the project is not within officially designated state scenic highways.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

Some existing vegetation, including several oak trees, would be removed to build the new roadway alignment and bridge. However, the construction of the new bridge would not form a visual impact on the surrounding area since the proposed bridge design matches common features within this route. Only minor, temporary visual impacts from vegetation removal are expected from the project.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The impacts from vegetation removal would be compensated for with tree plantings and revegetation onsite, if possible. Otherwise, Caltrans would compensate through offsite replanting. The project design would also include location-appropriate bridge railings and structures to match the surroundings. As such, the project is expected to have minimal impacts on scenic resources.

## **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 the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance 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?	<b>No Impact</b>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<b>No Impact</b>
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))?	<b>No Impact</b>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 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 31, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality</b>
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<b>No Impact</b>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<b>No Impact</b>

#### **2.1.4 Biological Resources**

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated November 17, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources</b>
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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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?	<b>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>

### ***Affected Environment***

The Biological Study Area for the project supports valley foothill riparian and annual grassland communities populated by Himalayan blackberry, willows, oaks, and cottonwood. It also includes the North Fork of the Calaveras River, which qualifies as both Other Waters of the U.S. and Waters of the State. There is also riparian habitat under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that would be impacted by in-channel work.

These natural communities contain potential habitats for foothill yellow-legged frogs and western pond turtles, both of which are special-status wildlife species. Bridge and tree removal operations may also affect structure- or tree-roosting bats and migratory birds in the project vicinity. The project area is within the recorded range of the Monarch butterfly, a candidate species for the Federal Endangered Species Act. No formal surveys for Monarch butterflies were conducted, and none were seen during site visits. However, the area contains plants that may host or supply nectar to Monarch butterflies.

Based on botanical surveys and the lack of appropriate soils and wetlands, the project area does not contain any special-status plant species. There are also no special-status fish species recorded in the project area.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The project would result in permanent impacts to small areas of Waters of the State and Other Waters of the U.S. The project would also remove up to 0.23

acre of riparian woodland containing valley oaks and cause 149.5 cubic yards of permanent fill in 0.03 acre of the North Fork Calaveras River that qualifies as Other Waters of the U.S. Additionally, the project would result in 284.0 cubic yards of permanent fill in 0.27 acre of Waters of the State.

Mitigation measures would be included in the project to compensate for these permanent impacts, and standard measures and Best Management Practices would be used to reduce impacts as feasible.

The project would not permanently impact habitat connectivity in the area, but temporary impacts from water diversions and other construction activities may occur. With the use of avoidance measures, no take of protected California red-legged frogs, foothill yellow-legged frogs, or western pond turtles is expected during construction activities. Tree removal and construction activities may potentially disturb nesting migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The project also has the potential to impact plants that supply nectar to migrating Monarch butterflies, resulting in the potential take of a federal candidate species.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The project would include agency consultation and permitting to ensure compliance with environmental regulations. A Biological Assessment would be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for consultation, and a response would be obtained before the final environmental document is approved.

The project would also require a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the placement of fill, a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Environmentally sensitive areas would be shown on contract plans and further discussed in Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications Section 14-1.02, along with Standard Special Provisions as needed. These areas would be identified with temporary orange fencing or other high-visibility markings. Work would be stopped, and the Caltrans Resident Engineer would be notified if the contractor encroaches past these boundaries. A designated biologist would also be present to monitor any activities that may potentially impact biological resources or result in the take of regulated species.

Per Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications and Standard Special Provisions Section 14-6.03A, preconstruction surveys would be required for Monarch butterflies, bumblebee hives, California red-legged frogs, foothill yellow-legged frogs, western pond turtles, roosting bats, and nesting birds.

The contractor-supplied biologist would prepare a Natural Resources Protection Program within seven days of contract approval as per Caltrans 2018 Standard Special Provisions Section 14-6.03D(2). The Natural Resources Protection Program would describe the measures and schedules for protecting biological resources and regulatory compliance and must be approved by Caltrans before the start of construction activities.

To minimize impacts to protected waters and riparian habitat, all construction that would occur in an aquatic habitat would be performed between May 1 and October 15 of any construction season, unless regulatory agencies approve an alternative work window.

Caltrans Best Management Practices and other avoidance and minimization measures would also be required during construction. These would include but would not be limited to mandatory worker environmental awareness training for construction personnel, biological monitoring during construction, sensitive species avoidance, and revegetation of disturbed areas before October 15 of each construction season. A full list of Best Management Practices can be found in Section 1.6 of this environmental document.

The project would compensate for impacts to wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S. through participation in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sacramento District California In-Lieu Fee Program.

Valley oak tree replacement plantings would be required by California State Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 17 and the Calaveras County Oak Woodland Management Plan. Trees would be replanted onsite or offsite to compensate for the small area of permanent impacts to oak woodlands and Waters of the State.

### 2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report, Historical Resource Evaluation Report, and Archaeological Survey Report dated October 21, 2021, 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?	<b>No Impact</b>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<b>No Impact</b>

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources</b>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.6 Energy

Considering the Best Management Practices to be implemented during project construction to limit energy waste and pollutant emissions, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

### 2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated February 4, 2017, and communications with Caltrans transportation engineers dated October 25, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils</b>
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.	<b>No Impact</b>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<b>No Impact</b>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<b>No Impact</b>
iv) Landslides?	<b>No Impact</b>



<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils</b>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated August 31, 2021, and the Climate Change Study dated November 19, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

### ***Affected Environment***

The project is included in the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan for the Calaveras Council of Governments. The regional greenhouse gas reduction target is not specified, though the plan lists the reduction of greenhouse gas production as a goal for Calaveras County.

The plan also discusses several policy strategies to reduce greenhouse gas production as part of Goal 2 (“Emergency Access/Climate Resilience”) and

Goal 5 (“Environment”) of the county’s Regional Transportation Plan. Among these are interagency coordination, more compact development strategies to reduce transportation demand, expanding electric vehicle infrastructure, and increasing the mode share of public transit and nonmotorized travel through the construction of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The project would not increase operational emissions for the project area. The purpose of the project is to replace the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge on a parallel alignment on State Route 12 without building additional travel lanes or increasing roadway vehicle capacity. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 12, no increase in vehicle miles traveled or operational greenhouse gas emissions would occur as a result of project implementation.

Some greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable. Construction emissions for the project were calculated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET) v1.1. Project construction is expected to generate about 230 tons of carbon dioxide during the 240 working days duration. However, because this is not a capacity-increasing project and applicable minimization measures would be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the project’s impacts would be less than significant.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The project will include several measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from construction. These will include the reduction of construction waste, use of construction equipment with improved fuel efficiency, construction environmental training, reducing work windows and falsework where feasible, salvaging rebar from demolished concrete, maximizing the use of recycled materials, lowering the rolling resistance of highway surfaces, balancing cut and fill quantities to reduce earthwork transporting, and designing long-lasting pavement structures.

## **2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated September 8, 2021, 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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<b>No Impact</b>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Quality Assessment Report dated April 26, 2021, and the Location Hydraulic Study dated November 4, 2021, 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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<b>No Impact</b>
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;	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
(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	<b>No Impact</b>
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<b>No Impact</b>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<b>No Impact</b>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<b>No Impact</b>

### ***Affected Environment***

Calaveras County has three primary river systems—the Mokelumne, Calaveras, and Stanislaus Rivers—which carry runoff from the Sierra Nevada to California’s Central Valley. All three rivers are dammed on their main branch to provide irrigation in the Central Valley and municipal water for users both within and outside of Calaveras County.

The Calaveras River is a tributary to the San Joaquin River and splits into North and South Forks. The North Fork joins the South Fork to form the New Hogan Reservoir and Calaveras River just south of the North Fork Calaveras River Bridge. The river is fed by rainwater and snowmelt from a watershed about 470 square miles in size, most of which is within Calaveras County.

Surface water quality in Calaveras County is protected through the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board basin plan, which sets Total Maximum Daily Loads for pollutants. Groundwater resources at the project location are hosted by fractured bedrock, with characteristically low groundwater retention.

Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency show that the proposed bridge replacement location falls within the 100-year floodplain. The Federal Emergency Management Agency uses the 1 percent annual chance (100-year) flood as the base flood for floodplain management purposes. Construction or encroachment on floodplains can reduce flood-carrying capacity, increase flood heights and velocities, and increase flood hazards in areas beyond the encroachment itself.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

In-channel construction work and water diversion operations would be necessary for the construction of the bridge foundations, ground-supported falsework, and the removal of the falsework and the existing bridge. This work may temporarily impact the site hydrology and water quality. Sediments, oils, grease, petroleum products, heavy metals, or other contaminants can be introduced through roadway runoff, excavations, grading operations, and accidental spills. Site hydrology can be impacted through obstructions to the channel's water flow.

However, the profile of the new bridge would be several feet higher than the existing bridge and would increase the freeboard above the historical high-water elevation by about 2 feet. The new bridge bents would also be built outside the main river channel to avoid blocking water flow. The project would not narrow the floodway opening or impede the free flow of storm runoff. Water diversion is expected to use the same channel to redirect flows during construction, which would minimize impacts to the existing current and water circulation. Finally, the old bridge and roadway alignment would be demolished, minimizing the net increase in paved surface area in the project vicinity. This would, in turn, reduce stormwater runoff and flood risk.

With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures and Construction Best Management Practices, no significant floodplain encroachment or impacts to water quality, circulation, or drainage are expected from the project.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

In-channel work would be prioritized during the dry periods of the year to reduce the probability of rain events that could mobilize loose soil or sediment during construction. Best Management Practices would also be implemented for the project. These would include but would not be limited to the preservation of existing vegetation where feasible, streambank stabilization, gravel bag berms, sandbag barriers, concrete curing, silt fencing or hay bales to minimize turbidity, solid waste management, spill prevention and cleanup, and equipment maintenance.

To reduce potential impacts to the floodplain, all temporary construction activities that would encroach into the floodplain would be removed after the completion of work. The floodplain would also be restored to its preconstruction state to preserve the natural and beneficial floodplain values. This would include the demolition of the original roadway and bridge.

The project would also reduce downstream impacts with erosion control measures to stabilize slopes and establish vegetation. Flared end sections, tees, and rock slope protection would also be used to reduce erosion from culvert runoff. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented on the project to ensure minimal impacts to hydrology and water quality.

#### **2.1.11 Land Use and Planning**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

#### **2.1.12 Mineral Resources**

Considering the information in the Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated February 4, 2017, and communications with Caltrans transportation engineers dated October 25, 2021, 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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Study dated September 1, 2021, 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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>

### ***Affected Environment***

The project area is rural, with only one sensitive receptor nearby at the Ham Ranch residence located 109 feet north of the current alignment of State Route 12. The project proposes to realign the roadway north of its current position, coming closer to the Ham Ranch residence.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

A highway realignment that halves the distance between the current alignment and a sensitive receptor would be defined as a Type One project (23 Code of Federal Regulations 772), which has the potential for significant

noise impacts. However, the project would move the State Route 12 alignment only 39.1 feet closer to the residence, less than half of the original distance. As such, it would not qualify as a Type One project.

Construction activities would produce noise and vibrations in the project vicinity. However, no significant impacts are expected because construction would be conducted in a rural setting and in accordance with the following minimization measures.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures***

Temporary construction noise and vibration impacts would be minimized with the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8 Noise Control. This section sets maximum noise levels for construction equipment to ensure minimal impacts to sensitive receptors.

Additionally, the contractor would not exceed 86 A-weighted decibels Maximum Sound Level at 50 feet from job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. The contractor would also be required to use the manufacturer-recommended muffler on any construction equipment with internal combustion engines.

### **2.1.14 Population and Housing**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing</b>
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)?	<b>No Impact</b>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<b>No Impact</b>

### **2.1.15 Public Services**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:



<b>Question:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
Police protection?	<b>No Impact</b>
Schools?	<b>No Impact</b>
Parks?	<b>No Impact</b>
Other public facilities?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

<b>Question—Would the project:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

### 2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated October 21, 2021, 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:

<b>Question:</b>	<b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources</b>
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	<b>No Impact</b>
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.	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated November 4, 2021, the Initial Site Assessment dated September 8, 2021, the Water Quality Assessment Report dated April 26, 2021, and the Location Hydraulic Study dated November 4, 2021, 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?	<b>No Impact</b>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<b>No Impact</b>

### 2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the 2021 Calaveras County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan dated June 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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?	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>
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?	<b>No Impact</b>

### ***Affected Environment***

The project is in a very high fire risk area, as delineated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Hazard Severity Zone mapping. Per the 2021 Calaveras County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Calaveras County's fire season typically extends from early spring to late fall, though drought and diminishing forest health have extended the fire season to a year-round event. Fire conditions arise from a combination of hot weather, an accumulation of vegetation, and low moisture content in the air. Fire risk also is related to the Wildland Urban Interface, or the boundary between human development and wildlands. A large proportion of wildfires begin at the Wildland Urban Interface due to human involvement.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The project would realign North Fork Calaveras Creek Bridge and State Route 12 on a nearby alignment to the north. Construction is planned for the dry period of the year to avoid high water conditions and water quality impacts during in-channel work. To reduce the risk of fire during construction, the project design would include vegetation removal around work areas and the new roadway alignment, which would reduce the risk of dry brush or other vegetation from catching fire from close contact with construction equipment.

Because the current alignment would be demolished, the project would not cause a substantial increase in the Wildland Urban Interface. To further reduce operational fire hazards from the project, the proposed design would

also include an extension of paved shoulders throughout the new alignment to match the shoulders of State Route 12. This would increase the distance between the traveled way and any potential vegetation and provide a paved pullout area for vehicles to reduce contact with dry vegetation.

***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Caltrans Construction Best Management Practices would be implemented to avoid fire risk, including measures to contain all trash and ban smoking or firearms on the construction site. Vegetation would be cleared from the project area to ensure minimal contact with construction equipment, and fire risk would be minimized with the inclusion of 8-foot-wide paved shoulders on either side of the new bridge and alignment. With the inclusion of these project elements and Construction Best Management Practices, the project would have a less than significant impact on wildfire risk.

**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?	<b>No Impact</b>
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)?	<b>No Impact</b>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<b>No Impact</b>



# Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Gavin Newsom, Governor

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

August 2020

## 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 nondiscriminatory 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) 324-8379 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 1823 14<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at [<Title.VI@dot.ca.gov>](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

*Original signed by*  
Toks Omishakin  
Director

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"*





## **List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)**

Air Quality Memorandum

Noise Compliance Study

Water Quality Assessment Report

Natural Environment Study

Biological Assessment

Community Impact Memorandum

Climate Change Study

Location Hydraulic Study

Historic Property Survey Report

- Historical Resource Evaluation Report
- Archaeological Survey Report

Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report

Paleontology Memorandum

Initial Site Assessment

Scenic Resource Evaluation

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

Jaycee Azevedo  
District 10 Environmental Division  
California Department of Transportation  
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205

Or send your request via email to: [Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov)  
Or call: 209-992-9824

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title

General location information

District number-county code-route-post mile

Project ID number