

El Dorado 2R Rehabilitation Project

On Interstate 5 in Fresno County, from just south of the El Dorado Avenue
Overcrossing to just south of the Tuolumne Avenue Overcrossing

06-FRE-5-PM 10.0-21.0

Project ID Number 0619000044

Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

June 2026



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 Fresno 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 6 Office, 1352 West Olive Avenue, Fresno, California 93728, during business hours, and at the Coalinga-Huron District Library, 305 North 4th Street, Coalinga, California 93210, during business hours. This document may be downloaded at the following website: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-6/district-6-projects/06-0y370>.
- Tell us what you think. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Judith Lopez, District 6 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726. Submit comments via email to: judith.lopez@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: July 9, 2026.

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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The project would cold plane the existing pavement and replace it with new pavement. The project would also install shoulder rumble strips, upgrade guardrails, drainage systems, dikes, signs, Transportation Management System elements, and pavement striping.

**INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed 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

David Johnson

David Johnson
Acting Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

1/29/2026

Date

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

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DRAFT
Proposed Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, California Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-FRE-5-PM 10.0-21.0

EA/Project Number: EA 06-0Y370 and Project ID Number 0619000044

Project Description

The project would cold plane the existing asphalt concrete pavement and replace it with a leveling course of 0.15 foot of Hot Mix Asphalt, a Rubberized or Geosynthetic Pavement Interlayer, 0.25 foot of Hot mix asphalt, and topped with 0.25 foot of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt Gap Graded. Other project work would include installing inside and outside shoulder rumble strips and placing shoulder backing. Any severely distressed underlying Portland Cement concrete panels will be replaced with hot mix asphalt. Additionally, guardrail systems, existing drainage systems, dikes, roadside signs, and Traffic Management System elements will be upgraded or replaced as needed.

Determination

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

The project would have no effect on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, public services, recreation, transportation, and tribal cultural resources.

The project would have less than significant effects on air quality, biological resources, and greenhouse gas emissions.

David Johnson
Acting Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to extend the life of the existing pavement on the northbound and southbound lanes of Interstate 5 within Fresno County, from post mile 10.0 to post mile 21.0. Throughout the project limits, Interstate 5 is a four-lane divided freeway that extends across a relatively flat terrain with primarily horizontal alignment. The land use through these limits is primarily agricultural. Interstate 5 also serves intermodal services, such as truck-to-rail modes, and provides an alternate north-south route for Interstate 5 and State Route 99 travelers.

The estimated project cost is \$45 million without escalation. The project is to be funded by the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program and is scheduled to be delivered in the 2027/2028 fiscal year. It has been determined that this project is eligible for federal aid funding.

1.2 Purpose and Need

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

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this 2R project is to restore the existing four-lane, divided Interstate 5 freeway to a state of good repair so that the roadway remains in a condition that minimizes future maintenance costs. The project would bring culverts up to standard and upgrade inside and outside shoulder rumble strips, drainage systems, signs, and Intelligent Transportation System elements.

1.2.2 Need

Within the project limits, there is a considerable amount of distress on the existing flexible pavement, and rehabilitation is needed to prevent further deterioration of the roadway.

1.3 Project Description

The project would cold plane the existing asphalt concrete pavement and replace it with a leveling course of 0.15 foot of Hot Mix Asphalt, a Rubberized or Geosynthetic Pavement Interlayer, 0.25 foot of Hot mix asphalt, and

topped with 0.25 foot of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt Gap Graded. Other project work would include installing inside and outside shoulder rumble strips and placing shoulder backing. Any severely distressed underlying Portland Cement concrete panels will be replaced with hot mix asphalt. Additionally, guardrail systems, existing drainage systems, dikes, roadside signs, and Traffic Management System elements will be upgraded or replaced as needed.

Figure 1-1 shows the project vicinity map, and Figure 1-2 shows the project location map.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

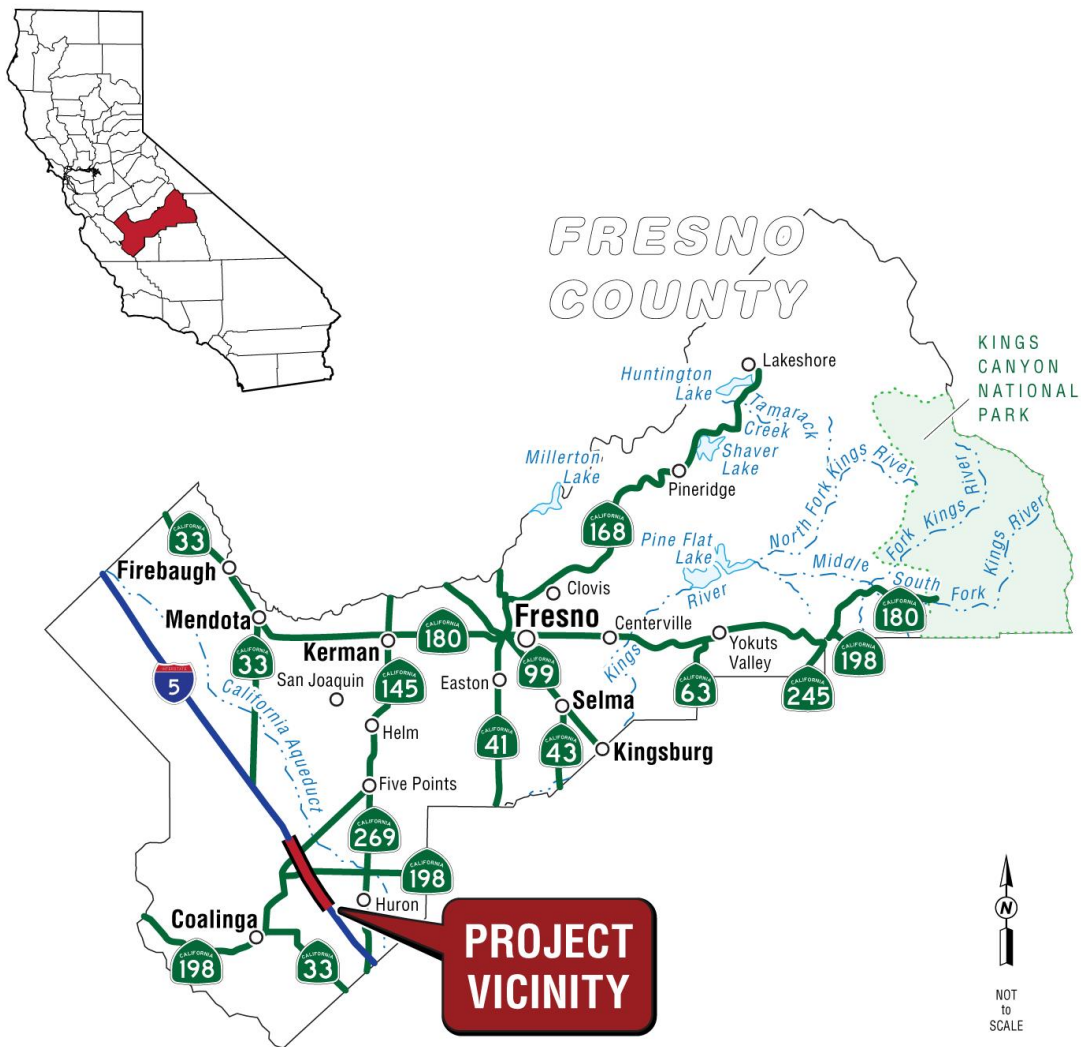


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

The project includes a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

Alternative 1 – Programmable Project Alternative:

The project would cold plane the existing pavement and replace it with a leveling course of 0.15 foot of Hot Mix Asphalt, a Rubberized or Geosynthetic Pavement Interlayer, 0.25 foot of Hot mix asphalt, and topped with 0.25 foot of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt Gap Graded. Other project work would include installing inside and outside shoulder rumble strips and placing shoulder backing. Any severely distressed underlying Portland Cement concrete

panels will be replaced with hot mix asphalt. Additionally, guardrail systems, existing drainage systems, dikes, roadside signs, and Traffic Management System elements will be upgraded or replaced as needed.

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 Build Alternatives.”

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would leave the existing facility in its current condition, and the roadway would continue to deteriorate. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project.

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

- Caltrans Standard Special Provisions Section 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) includes specifications for handling, removing, and disposing of unregulated earth material containing lead. Management of this material exposes workers to health hazards that must be addressed in the project's lead compliance plan before construction starts.
- Caltrans Standard Special Provisions Section 14-11.08 includes specifications for the management of regulated material containing aerially deposited lead. Management of the material includes excavating, loading and unloading containers or trucks, transporting, and disposing of the material.
- Caltrans Standard Special Provisions Section 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.
- Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 13-1: If the project disturbs less than 1 acre of soil, the contractor is required to put together a Water Pollution Control Plan that addresses all potential water quality impacts that may occur when performing construction activities. If the project disturbs 1 acre or more of soil, the following requirements would be required, such as submitting a Notice of Intent to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days before construction starts.

- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the resident engineer.
- A Notice of Termination shall be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board upon completion of construction and site stabilization. A project would be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.
- Section 14-0.02 Air Pollution Control: Comply with air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the construction contract.
- Section 14-2.03A: If human remains are encountered during construction on state or private lands, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped near the discovery and the county coroner be notified. The coroner would determine if the remains are Native American (California Public Resources Code Section 5097). If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner would notify the California Native American Heritage Commission. The California Native American Heritage Commission must then select and notify the person designated as the Most Likely Descendant. The Caltrans District Native American Coordinator would contact the designated Most Likely Descendant to ensure that lines of communication are quickly established. The Most Likely Descendant would provide Caltrans or the private landowner with information on how they want the human remains to be treated.

It is Caltrans' policy to implement the wishes of the Most Likely Descendant if it is feasible to do so. If the location where human remains are found is a temporary easement on private land, the Most Likely Descendant would provide the landowner with a statement of how they want the human remains to be treated. The landowner will decide if he or she wants to comply with the wishes of the Most Likely Descendant and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act regulations. If human remains are found on federal lands, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 protocol will be followed. All construction or archaeological activity will be terminated in the location if human remains are found on federal lands. The federal agency responsible will be contacted. Cultural staff of that agency will also be notified of the inadvertent discovery of human remains. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act consultation will be conducted by the appropriate staff at the federal agency with jurisdiction.

- Section 14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork

operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, provide a water truck or tank on the job site.

- Section 14-8.02 Noise Control: Pertains to controlling and monitoring noise resulting from work activities. Noise levels are not to exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife	Letter of Concurrence	The Letter of Concurrence will be obtained before construction.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the 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, and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Scenic Resource Evaluation dated March 12, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in California 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 Forestry 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 most work would occur within Caltrans’ right-of-way, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

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

2.1.3 Air Quality

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

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated May 29, 2025, 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 October 24, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	No 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) and b) The Biological Study Area includes the project footprint within the Caltrans right-of-way and an additional 50-foot buffer on either side of jurisdictional culverts.

The Biological Study Area for the proposed project is surrounded by non-native grassland/rangeland, agricultural row crops and tree crops, open, dry agricultural areas, and fallowed fields next to Interstate 5. The ground along the right-of-way is a compacted road shoulder and agricultural buffer and is not conducive to most sensitive plants and burrowing animals.

The rural non-native grasslands next to the action area could support certain special-status species; however, no signs were found during preliminary surveys.

Aerial analysis (using Google Earth and ArcGIS) reveals that riparian habitats are not present; however, portions of the action area run next to the Coalinga Canal, which is a man-made cement-lined structure that carries water throughout the Central Valley year-round. Both the Coalinga Canal and the orchards running next to the action area are capable of supporting foraging and nesting habitat for migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

A list of federally endangered species and critical habitats that may be affected by the project was requested on September 8, 2025. In-office research (checking the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation website, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Database, and the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare Plants) and field surveys were conducted by Caltrans biologists for the project.

Drainage, botanical, habitat, and general wildlife surveys were performed in June and July of 2025.

Special-Status Plant Species

Potential habitat for Lost Hills crownscale, brittlescale, California jewelflower, Hall's tarplant, recurved larkspur, Alkali-sink goldfields, pale-yellow layia, panoche peppergrass, showy golden madia, and San Joaquin woolly-threads was present within parts of the Biological Study Area. The California Native Plant Society ranking of these species is shown below:

- Lost Hills crownscale – 1B.2
- Brittlescale – 1B.2

- California jewelflower—Federally Endangered/State Endangered/1B.1 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Seriously Threatened
- San Joaquin woolly-threads—Federally Endangered/1B.2
- Hall's tarplant—1B.1 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Seriously Threatened
- Recurved Larkspur—1B.2 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Moderately Threatened
- Alkali-sink goldfields—1B.1 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Seriously Threatened
- Pale-yellow Layia—1B.1 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Seriously Threatened
- Panoche peppergrass—1B.2 Rare, Threatened or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Moderately Threatened
- Showy Golden Madia-1B.1 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere/Seriously Threatened

Even though potential habitat was present, none of the species were seen during surveys.

Special-Status Animal Species

Potential habitat for the burrowing owl, Crotch's bumblebee, giant kangaroo rat, short-nosed kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, American badger, western spadefoot toad, and San Joaquin kit fox was present within the Biological Study Area. The federal and state status is shown below:

- Burrowing owl—California State Species of Special Concern
- Crotch's bumblebee—California State Candidate Endangered Species
- Giant kangaroo rat—California Endangered Species/Federal Endangered Species
- Blunt-nosed leopard lizard—California Endangered Species/Federal Endangered Species
- American badger—California Species of Special Concern
- Western spadefoot toad—California State Species of Special Concern/Proposed Federally Threatened Species.

- San Joaquin kit fox—California Threatened and Federal Endangered Species

While potential habitat is present, no special-status species were seen during surveys.

Habitats and Natural Communities of Concern

There is no U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-listed critical habitat within the Biological Study Area.

Jurisdictional Waterways and Hydrological Resources

The project footprint crosses seven intermittent drainages and the Coalinga Canal. Of those, the project would only affect two jurisdictional waterways at culvert work locations near post mile 19.59 and post mile 16.54. These locations have been determined to be Waters of the State. The drainage near post mile 19.59 appears to be a natural precipitation-driven, intermittent stream, which only carries water for short periods each year. No wetland-associated plant species were found within the streambed. The second drainage (located at post mile 16.54) appears to be a smaller natural drainage that has been further mechanically channelized to transport agricultural overflow/runoff. Agricultural surface water is present for brief periods during the wet season, but the water table appears to lie well below the ground surface for most of the year. No wetland-associated plant species were found within the drainage.

The maintenance-level culvert work proposed at these two locations is covered by the existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife Routine Maintenance Agreement (NOTIFICATION NUMBER 1600-2018-0137-R4). No other water permits are required.

Environmental Consequences

Table 2.1 below provides an evaluation of Federal Endangered Species Act Effect Determinations of species that may have suitable habitat within the project limits.

Table 2.1 Summary of Federal Endangered Species Act Effect Determinations

Species	Federal Status	Effect Determination	Rationale
San Joaquin kit fox	Endangered	May effect not likely to adversely affect	Habitat present near PM 19.59, PM 17.94 & PM 16.5, but not within the impact area. No recent records of San Joaquin kit fox have been documented near the biological study area.
Blunt-nosed leopard lizard	Endangered	No Effect	No suitable open scrub was detected; soils were compacted and repeatedly graded; none were observed during the 2024 and 2025 surveys.
Giant kangaroo rat	Endangered	No Effect	No burrow systems were present; soils were compacted in the right-of-way; the nearest populations were several miles away in Kettleman Hills.
Western spadefoot	Federally Proposed Threatened	No Effect	Habitat present in the biological study area near PM 19.59, 17.94 & 16.5, but not within the impact area
San Joaquin woolythreads	<i>Monolopia cogdonii</i>	No Effect	Some habitats present in the biological study area near PM 19.59, but not in the project impact area

The following federally listed species evaluated during biological surveys but considered to have no habitat with the biological study area include: the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), Fresno kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides exilis*), California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*), Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), Delta smelt (*Hvnomesus transoacificus*), and giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*). A no effect determination was made for these species. No further discussion or evaluation is required.

Special-Status Plant Species

Although the Biological Study Area contains small areas of suitable habitat for special-status plant species, habitat within the project footprint is limited due to current levels of disturbance. Habitat alteration, conversion to agricultural

lands, compacted soils, and traffic volumes have greatly reduced the likelihood of sensitive plant species occurring within the Biological Study Area. Though marginal habitat qualities exist near post miles 19.59 and 17.91, for Lost Hills crownscale, brittlescale, Hall's tar plant, recurved larkspur, alkali-sink goldfields, pale-yellow layia, panoche peppergrass, and showy golden madia the project is unlikely to impact special-status plant species for two reasons. One is due to the small size of the impact area, and the other is because Caltrans biologists or the California Natural Diversity Database have not documented any observations within the Biological Study Area.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the California jewel flower and the San Joaquin woolly-threads concludes that the project would not affect the species or their habitat.

Special-Status Animal Species

Burrowing Owl

Due to the limited size of the impact area, the nature of the work, and the limited California Natural Diversity Database observations, no impacts are anticipated to burrowing owl.

Crotch's Bumblebee

Potential foraging and nesting habitat for the Crotch's bumblebee may be temporarily impacted by work performed directly around culvert inlets/outlets. The project is unlikely to have a direct impact on the Crotch's bumblebee due to the evasive nature of the species and the limited size of the expected project impacts.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard

Because of the limited size and scope of the work and the limited habitat potential within the Biological Study Area, no impacts to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard are anticipated.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard concludes that the project would have no effect on the species or its habitat.

Giant Kangaroo Rat

The project would not impact Giant kangaroo rat.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the giant kangaroo rat is that the project would have no effect on either species or their habitat.

American Badger

No permanent impacts to the American Badger are anticipated from the planned paving, patchwork, and culvert repairs; therefore, the project is not expected to impact the American badger.

Western Spadefoot Toad

Maintenance work around culverts/inlets is unlikely to impact the western spadefoot toad. The limited area of impact, combined with the lack of local observations on the California Natural Diversity Database and iNaturalist, and the flashy nature of water flowing through those areas, also makes the presence of the western spadefoot toad unlikely. The project is not expected to negatively impact the species, especially if work is conducted during the dry season. The species is currently a federal candidate species and does not require consultation. If the species is listed before construction starts, federal consultation may be required.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

Due to the small impact area and limited scale of the planned paving, patchwork, and culvert repairs, no permanent impacts are expected to habitat or the species is expected. Because of this and the length of time since San Joaquin kit foxes were last seen, they are also not likely to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the San Joaquin kit fox concludes that the project would not adversely affect the species or its habitat.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Special-Status Plant Species

A qualified biologist would conduct botanical surveys the season before construction starts, during the blooming period (February to August). Construction equipment staging areas shall be surveyed and approved by a qualified biologist before use. Staging shall occur in disturbed areas that have been environmentally cleared.

Special-Status Animal Species

Burrowing Owl

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for burrowing owls:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a

brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.

- *Preconstruction Surveys*: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- *Staging Area Compliance*: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- *Nighttime Construction Lighting*: For nighttime construction, focused and temporary lighting would be used and directed only toward the active work area. This measure would enhance safety and visibility while minimizing impacts to nocturnal wildlife.
- *No-Disturbance Buffers*: If burrowing owls are on-site, the appropriate no-disturbance buffer would be implemented.

Crotch's Bumblebee

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the Crotch's bumblebee:

- *Preconstruction Surveys*: A qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys 30 days before the start of ground disturbance. If any Crotch's bumblebees are detected, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be consulted. Construction equipment staging areas shall be surveyed and cleared by a qualified biologist before use. Staging shall occur in disturbed areas. All ingress/egress from work near post mile 19.59 would be on foot, with work vehicles posted on the road above. If any Crotch's bumblebees are on-site during preconstruction surveys, the appropriate resource agencies would be consulted.
- *Worker Environmental Awareness Training*: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- *Preconstruction Surveys*: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.

- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Giant Kangaroo Rat

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the giant kangaroo rat:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of

environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Short-Nosed Kangaroo Rat

- The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the short-nosed kangaroo rat:
- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

American Badger

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the American badger:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

- Burrows: Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

Western Spadefoot Toad

The following project-level measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the western spadefoot toad:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys for the western spadefoot toad no more than 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. Surveys would identify western spadefoot toads or signs of the species within 50 feet of the proposed culvert replacements.
- Precipitation: If precipitation is expected during construction, a qualified biologist would identify if additional surveys would be required.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- Burrows: Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The following project-level measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys for the San Joaquin kit fox no more than 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. Surveys would identify San

Joaquin kit foxes or signs of the species within 50 feet of the proposed culvert replacements.

- **Staging Area Compliance:** The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- **Burrows:** Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

Compensatory Mitigation:

No compensatory mitigation is proposed.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historical Property Survey Report dated July 9, 2025, 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 the information in the Energy Analysis Technical Memorandum dated May 14, 2025, 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 information in the California Department of Conservation Map Data Viewer webpage accessed in March 2025 and the Paleontological Identification Report dated September 14, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
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 and Greenhouse Gas Memorandum dated August 13, 2025, 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) and b) The proposed project is on Interstate 5 in Fresno County. Interstate 5 passes through somewhat level terrain surrounded by agricultural fields and orchards. The Fresno Council of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy guides transportation development and addresses greenhouse gases in the project area. Chapter 3 of the Sustainable Communities Strategy discusses the emissions-reduction strategy for the region. The Sustainable Communities Strategy strives to reduce air emissions from passenger vehicles and light-duty truck travel by better coordinating expenditures with forecasted development patterns and by helping to meet greenhouse gas targets for the region.

Environmental Consequences

Greenhouse gas emissions impacts on non-capacity-increasing projects, such as the El Dorado 2R Rehabilitation Project, are considered less than significant under CEQA because there would be no increase in operational emissions.

However, construction equipment, traffic delays, material processing, and delivery may generate short-term greenhouse gas emissions during construction. Carbon dioxide emissions generated from construction equipment were estimated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool Version 1.1. The estimated emissions are 1,333 tons of carbon dioxide per 250 working days.

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

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following project-level measures would be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction activities:

- To the extent feasible, limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- To the extent feasible, reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- To the extent feasible, supplement existing construction environmental training with information on methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- To the extent feasible, reduce construction waste by reusing or recycling construction and demolition waste.
- To the extent feasible, schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- To the extent feasible, design and install long-life pavement structures to minimize life-cycle costs.
- To the extent feasible, encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment by maintaining equipment in proper working condition, using the right size equipment for the job, and using equipment with new technologies.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated September 15, 2025, 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
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 April 29, 2025, 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
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 on-site or off-site;	No Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site;	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

The project would not physically divide an established community, and it would not conflict with the Fresno County General Plan or any other policy or regulation meant to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect. Considering these factors, 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
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	No Impact

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the California Department of Conservation Online Mineral Land Classification Interactive Map accessed in September 2024, 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 Compliance Study dated March 24, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 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 Public Services

The project would conduct maintenance on existing highway facilities along Interstate 5. Considering the information in the Project Initiation Report dated October 25, 2019, the following significance 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

2.1.15 Recreation

The project would upgrade existing highway facilities, and there are no recreation facilities within or near the project area. Thus, the following significance 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

2.1.16 Transportation

This project is listed in the 2023 Fresno Council of Governments' Federal Transportation Improvement Program as a pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation project.

The project is predominantly a pavement upgrade. The project type would not lead to a measurable and substantial increase in vehicle capacity travel. Considering this information from the draft Project Initiation Report dated October 25, 2019, the following significance 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

2.1.17 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historical Property Survey Report dated July 9, 2025, 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 California 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 California 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 California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

2.1.18 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering this information from the draft Project Initiation Report dated October 25, 2019, 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

2.1.19 Wildfire

Considering the information in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Fire Hazard Severity Zone Mapping accessed in August 2025, 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?	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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
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

2.1.20 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?	Less Than Significant Impact
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.)	No Impact
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	No Impact

Affected Environment

a) Potential habitat for the burrowing owl, Crotch’s bumblebee, giant kangaroo rat, short-nosed kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, American badger, western spadefoot toad, and San Joaquin kit fox was present within the Biological Study Area. The federal and state status is shown below:

- Burrowing owl—California State Species of Special Concern

- Crotch's bumblebee—California State Candidate Endangered Species
- Giant kangaroo rat—California Endangered Species/Federal Endangered Species
- Short-nosed kangaroo rat—California Endangered Species/Federal Endangered Species
- Blunt-nosed leopard lizard—California Endangered Species/Federal Endangered Species
- American badger—California Species of Special Concern
- Western spadefoot toad—California State Species of Special Concern/Proposed Federally Threatened Species.
- San Joaquin kit fox—California Threatened and Federal Endangered Species

While potential habitat is present, no special-status species were seen during surveys.

Environmental Consequences

Special-Status Plant Species

Although the Biological Study Area contains small areas of suitable habitat for special-status plant species, habitat within the project footprint is limited due to current levels of disturbance. Habitat alteration, conversion to agricultural lands, compacted soils, and traffic volumes have greatly reduced the likelihood of sensitive plant species occurring within the Biological Study Area. Though marginal habitat qualities exist near post miles 19.59 and 17.91, the project is unlikely to impact special-status plant species for two reasons. One is due to the small size of the impact area, and the other is because Caltrans biologists or the California Natural Diversity Database have not documented any observations within the Biological Study Area. The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the California jewelflower and the San Joaquin woolly-threads concludes that the project would not affect the species or their habitat.

Special-Status Animal Species

Burrowing Owls

Due to the limited size of the impact area, the nature of the work, and the limited California Natural Diversity Database observations, no impacts are anticipated to burrowing owls.

Crotch's Bumblebee

Potential foraging and nesting habitat for the Crotch's bumblebee may be temporarily impacted by work performed directly around culvert inlets/outlets.

The project is unlikely to have a direct impact on the Crotch's bumblebee due to the evasive nature of the species and the limited size of the expected project impacts.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard

Because of the limited size and scope of the work and the limited habitat potential within the Biological Study Area, no impacts to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard are anticipated.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard concludes that the project would have no effect on the species or its habitat.

Giant Kangaroo Rat

The project would not impact Giant kangaroo rat.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the giant kangaroo rat is that the project would have no effect on either species or their habitat.

American Badger

No permanent impacts to the American Badger are anticipated from the planned paving, patchwork, and culvert repairs; therefore, the project is not expected to impact the American badger.

Western Spadefoot Toad

Maintenance work around culverts/inlets is unlikely to impact the western spadefoot toad. The limited area of impact, combined with the lack of local observations on the California Natural Diversity Database and iNaturalist, and the flashy nature of water flowing through those areas, also makes the presence of the western spadefoot toad unlikely. The project is not expected to negatively impact the species, especially if work is conducted during the dry season. The species is currently a federal candidate species and does not require consultation. If the species is listed before construction starts, federal consultation may be required.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

Due to the small impact area and limited scale of the planned paving, patchwork, and culvert repairs, no permanent impacts are expected to habitat or the species is expected. Because of this and the length of time since San Joaquin kit foxes were last seen, they are also not likely to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

The Federal Endangered Species Act determination for the San Joaquin kit fox concludes that the project would not adversely affect the species or its habitat.

This project would have minimal to no impacts on biological resources. Thus, a determination of less than significant impacts was determined.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following are standard measures to ensure there are no impacts to special status species.

Special-Status Plant Species

A qualified biologist would conduct botanical surveys the season before construction starts, during the blooming period (February to August). Construction equipment staging areas shall be surveyed and approved by a qualified biologist before use. Staging shall occur in disturbed areas that have been environmentally cleared.

Special-Status Animal Species

Burrowing Owl

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for burrowing owls:

- ***Worker Environmental Awareness Training:*** Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- ***Preconstruction Surveys:*** A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- ***Staging Area Compliance:*** The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- ***Nighttime Construction Lighting:*** For nighttime construction, focused and temporary lighting would be used and directed only toward the active work area. This measure would enhance safety and visibility while minimizing impacts to nocturnal wildlife.
- ***No-Disturbance Buffers:*** If burrowing owls are on-site, the appropriate no-disturbance buffer would be implemented.

Crotch's Bumblebee

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the Crotch's bumblebee:

- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys 30 days before the start of ground disturbance. If any Crotch's bumblebees are detected, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be consulted. Construction equipment staging areas shall be surveyed and cleared by a qualified biologist before use. Staging shall occur in disturbed areas. All ingress/egress from work near post mile 19.59 would be on foot, with work vehicles posted on the road above. If any Crotch's bumblebees are on-site during preconstruction surveys, the appropriate resource agencies would be consulted.
- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.

- **Staging Area Compliance:** The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Giant Kangaroo Rat

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the giant kangaroo rat:

- **Worker Environmental Awareness Training:** Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- **Preconstruction Surveys:** A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- **Staging Area Compliance:** The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

Short-Nosed Kangaroo Rat

- The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the short-nosed kangaroo rat:
- **Worker Environmental Awareness Training:** Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- **Preconstruction Surveys:** A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- **Staging Area Compliance:** The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of

environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.

American Badger

The following are the minimization and avoidance measures for the American badger:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys within 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. These surveys would assess the presence of special-status species and determine if additional measures are necessary.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- Burrows: Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

Western Spadefoot Toad

The following project-level measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the western spadefoot toad:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys for the western spadefoot toad no more than 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. Surveys would identify western spadefoot toads or signs of the species within 50 feet of the proposed culvert replacements.
- Precipitation: If precipitation is expected during construction, a qualified biologist would identify if additional surveys would be required.

- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- Burrows: Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The following project-level measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training: Before construction starts, all personnel—including the contractor, subcontractors, and their employees—would attend an environmental education training course conducted by a qualified biologist. The training course would include a brief presentation on the biology, legal protections, and avoidance measures for special-status species that could be in the project area.
- Preconstruction Surveys: A qualified biologist would conduct preconstruction surveys for the San Joaquin kit fox no more than 30 days before the start of ground-disturbing activities. Surveys would identify San Joaquin kit foxes or signs of the species within 50 feet of the proposed culvert replacements.
- Staging Area Compliance: The project biologist would approve all staging areas and clearly mark them with stakes or flagging. If any staging or storage occurs outside the project footprint or on private property, proof of environmental compliance with applicable state and federal regulations would be submitted to the project engineer.
- Burrows: Burrows in the right of way not directly affected by construction will be avoided.

Chapter 3 **Coordination**

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required to identify potential impacts, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, as well as related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through several formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings and interagency coordination meetings.

This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

3.1 Coordination with Native American Groups

3.1.1 California Native American Heritage Commission

January 2, 2025

Caltrans emailed the California Native American Heritage Commission requesting a Sacred Lands File.

January 23, 2025

The California Native American Heritage Commission responded to Caltrans' request, stating that the Sacred Lands File search resulted in negative findings.

Tribes

Native American consultation was initiated through letters mailed via the U.S. Postal Service and emailed to tribal representatives on October 28, 2024, and January 2, 2025. The District 6 Native American Coordinator provided a consultation list for the area of potential effects that included names of representatives who might be interested in the proposed undertaking or able to provide information regarding Native American resources in the area of potential effects. The correspondence included an invitation to consult under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, California Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, and Chapter 532 of Statutes 2014 (i.e., Assembly Bill 52). These representatives are:

- Charmaine McDarment, Chairperson, Tule River Indian Tribe of California
- Robert Gomez Jr., Chairman, Tübatulabals of Kern Valley
- Julian Behill, Vice-Chairperson, Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield

- John Ledger, Dumna Wo-Wah Tribal
- Linda Silva, Chumash Native Nation
- Michelle Heredia-Cordova, Chairperson, Table Mountain Rancheria
- Octavio Escobedo III, Chairman, Tejon Indian Tribe
- Leo Sisco, Chairman, Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe
- Kenneth Woodrow, Chairperson, Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band

Follow-up phone calls were made on January 21, 2025. No responses have been received to date. Consultation is considered ongoing for the life of the undertaking.

3.2 Coordination with Agencies

3.2.1 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

September 8, 2025

Caltrans obtained a threatened and endangered species list from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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 2024

TITLE VI/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the assurances set forth in the Caltrans' Title VI Program Plan, to ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds 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. Related non-discrimination authorities, remedies, and state law further those protections, including sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Caltrans is committed to complying with 23 C.F.R. Part 200, 49 C.F.R. Part 21, 49 C.F.R. Part 303, and the Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B. 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 (including LEP). In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

The overall responsibility for this policy is assigned to the Caltrans Director. The Caltrans Title VI Coordinator is assigned to the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Deputy Director, who then delegates sufficient responsibility and authority to the Office of Civil Rights' managers, including the Title VI Branch Manager, to effectively implement the Caltrans Title VI Program. Individuals with questions or requiring additional information relating to the policy or the implementation of the Caltrans Title VI Program should contact the Title VI Branch Manager at title.vi@dot.ca.gov or at (916) 639-6392, or visit the following web page: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

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

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately

Air Quality Report

Noise Study Report

Water Quality Report

Natural Environment Study—Minimal Impacts

Historical Property Survey Report

- Historic Resource Evaluation Report
- Historic Architectural Survey Report
- Archaeological Survey Report

Hazardous Waste Reports

- Initial Site Assessment
- Preliminary Site Investigation (Geophysical Survey)

Scenic Resource Evaluation/Visual Assessment

Initial Paleontology Study

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

Judith Lopez
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726

Or send your request via email to: judith.lopez@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 559-240-5068

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: El Dorado 2R Rehabilitation

General location information: On Interstate 5 in Fresno County

District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-FRE-5-PM 10.0-21.0

Project ID number: 0619000044