



Filing of the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk begins a 35-day period during which the finding of categorical exemption may be challenged by the public. During this period, staff will file notices with local agencies that the project is also exempt from coastal development permit requirements. At this time, it is anticipated that installation of the 24 sensors between the Ventura County Line to Winchester Canyon Road will occur sometime in late June 2008.

## **DISCUSSION:**

With the 101/Milpas to Cabrillo Hot Springs project ready to begin construction and a number of other highway improvements on 101 currently underway, the development and implementation of monitoring tools to manage the on-going operations of the highway is critically important.

### **Project Description and Purpose**

The scope for the Highway 101 Traffic Congestion Sensor Project consists of installing up to 24 sensors on existing infrastructure (light poles, signs, call boxes) along Highway 101 from the Ventura County line to Winchester Canyon Road. The sensors will be spaced one to two miles apart along the both the northbound and southbound lanes.

When installed, the sensors will gather data on the average speed of traffic along various segments of Highway 101. The data will be transmitted via a wireless connection to the headquarters of SpeedInfo (supplier of the sensors) who will use an algorithmic formula to transform the raw data into usable public and technical information.



One of the planned uses is to generate speed maps which show levels of congestion in different colors. The speed maps will be available for viewing on publicly accessible websites such as the website specifically prepared for the US 101/Milpas to Cabrillo Hot Springs Project [www.sbroads.com](http://www.sbroads.com). The data gathered by the speed sensors will also be useful in that it will provide a continual stream of traffic flow data that will be useful in the traffic studies being performed for other Highway 101 projects such as the 101 Widening from Mussel Shoals to Caprinteria Creek, the 101 South Coast HOV project and the Corridor System Management Plan being undertaken by Caltrans for the entire Highway 101 corridor from Rice Road in Ventura County to Winchester Canyon Road in Goleta.

### **Environmental Analysis and Clearance**

Staff has undertaken a preliminary environmental review of the Highway 101 Traffic Congestion Sensor Project pursuant to CEQA and its own Local CEQA guidelines and has determined that the project is “categorically exempt”. A project that is categorically exempt is one in which a determination has been made that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Article 19 of the CEQA guidelines defines a number of “classes” of projects which have been determined to be categorically exempt and the project falls within exempt Class 1 “Existing Facilities” which as defined in CEQA guidelines Section 15301, Article 19 as:

*The operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination... The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.*

Staff has prepared a Categorical Exemption (attached) for the project and is recommending that the SBCAG board find that the project is exempt and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk's office.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps in this project include filing notices with various local and state agencies indicating that the Highway 101 Traffic Congestion Sensor Project is exempt from coastal development permit requirements pursuant to the California Coastal Act. Staff will also work with Caltrans to obtain an encroachment permit for installation of the devices and continue to coordinate with VCTC and its contractor SpeedInfo to initiate the implementation of the sensors in June 2008. Installation should take approximately two weeks. Once installed, staff will work to get information posted on the [www.sbroads.com](http://www.sbroads.com) website and make information (via web links) available to other local agencies.

### **Funding**

SBCAG's \$10,000 contribution, which represents less than half of the project cost, would come from vehicle registration fees the agency receives as the county's Service Authority for Freeway Emergency (SAFE). SAFE funding can be used by State law only for "motorist aid purposes". SBCAG currently uses SAFE funding to operate and maintain the countywide highway call box system and the Freeway Service Patrol on the South Coast. As reported to the Board in February, there is sufficient budget capacity in the SAFE program to expend \$10,000 annually on traffic congestion sensors.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the board: 1) Find that the project is categorically exempt under CEQA and direct staff to file a *Notice of Exemption* with the County Clerk, and; 2) Approve the Highway 101 Traffic Congestion Sensors Project;

### **COMMITTEE REVIEW:**

None

**STAFF CONTACT:** Fred Luna



## CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FORM

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The scope for the US 101 Traffic Sensor Project consists of installing up to 24 sensors on existing infrastructure (light poles, signs, call boxes) along Highway 101 from the Ventura County line north to Winchester Canyon Road. The sensors will be spaced 1 to 2 miles along the both the northbound and southbound lanes.

When installed the sensors will gather data on the average speed of traffic along various segments of Highway 101. The data will be transmitted via a wireless connection to the headquarters of SpeedInfo (supplier of the sensors) who will use an algorithmic approach to transform the raw data into usable public and technical information. One of the planned uses is to generate speed maps which show levels of congestion in different colors. The speed maps will be available for viewing on publicly accessible websites such as the website specifically prepared for the US 101/Milpas to Cabrillo Hot Springs Project [www.sbroads.com](http://www.sbroads.com).

The project does not requires any right of way (all work will be done via encroachment permit on Caltrans right of way).

### CEQA COMPLIANCE

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the following statements (See 14 CCR 15300 et seq.):

- If this project falls within exempt class 3, 4, 5, 6 or 11, it does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law.
- There will not be a significant cumulative effect by this project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- There is not a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- This project does not damage a scenic resource within an officially designated state scenic highway.
- This project is not located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Govt. Code § 65962.5 ("Cortese List").
- This project does not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

### CEQA DETERMINATION

**Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the above statements, the project is:

**Categorically Exempt. Class 1.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

**Categorically Exempt. General Rule exemption.** [This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (CCR 15061[b][3])]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: SBCAG Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Project Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**To:** County Clerk, County of Santa Barbara

**From:** Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

Based on a preliminary review of the project the following activity is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in both the State and SBCAG Local Guidelines (dated May 1991) for the implementation of CEQA.

**Project Title:** US 101 ITS Project: Traffic Sensors

**Project Location:** On Highway 101 (US 101) in Santa Barbara County from 1.1 miles north of the Ventura County line (Bailard Avenue) in the City of Carpinteria north to ¼ mile north of Winchester Canyon Road in the City of Goleta.

**Project Description:** The project consists of installing 24 doppler radar sensors on existing infrastructure located along US 101 at approximately 1-2 mile spacing. The sensors will be installed on existing light poles, sign structures and roadside call boxes at approximately a height of 12' to 20' depending on the location. The sensors use Doppler-radar technology to gather data on traffic flow speeds and that data then can be mapped (to show congestion levels on the highway) and disseminated via publicly accessible website. The sensors are solar-powered and transmit data via wireless network.

**Exempt Status: (Check One)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial	(Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declared Emergency	(Sect. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Project	(Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Categorical Exemption	<b>Class 1 (CEQA Section 15301): Minor alteration of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Exemption	State Code number

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

1. Project falls within the exempt Class 1 under Article 19, Section 15301 of the CEQA guidelines

**Lead Agency Contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Kemp, Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date