



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178  
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**


**PROJECT TITLE: REQUEST FOR RECLASSIFICATION OF COACHELLA VALLEY FOR 1997 8-HOUR OZONE STANDARD**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) is the Lead Agency and has prepared a Notice of Exemption for the project identified above. South Coast AQMD staff has reviewed the request for reclassification of the Coachella Valley for 1997 8-hour ozone standard pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA.

Because the proposed project is administrative and procedural in nature, South Coast AQMD staff has determined that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. The proposed project is also considered categorically exempt because it is intended to further protect or enhance the environment pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Action by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment. Further, South Coast AQMD staff has determined that there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemption apply to the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions. A Notice of Exemption will be prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062 – Notice of Exemption, and if the project is approved, the Notice of Exemption will be filed with the county clerks of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Any questions regarding this Notice of Exemption should be sent to Barbara Radlein (c/o Planning, Rule Development and Area Sources) at the above address. Ms. Radlein can also be reached at (909) 396-2716. Mr. Zorik Pirveysian is also available at (909) 396-2431 to answer any questions regarding the proposed project.

**Date:** May 15, 2019

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

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

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**To:** County Clerks  
Counties of Los Angeles, Orange,  
Riverside, and San Bernardino

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

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**Project Title:** Request for Reclassification of the Coachella Valley for 1997 8-hour Ozone Standard

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**Project Location:** The project location is the portion of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) jurisdiction which covers the federal nonattainment area known as the Coachella Valley Planning Area, which is a sub-region of Riverside County and the Salton Sea Air Basin.

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**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** Due to higher ozone levels experienced in the Coachella Valley in 2017 and 2018 which caused exceedances of the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, the South Coast AQMD is submitting a request to the U.S. EPA to reclassify the Coachella Valley from Severe to Extreme nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard. The reclassification request is also seeking to establish a new attainment date of June 15, 2024 to provide additional time to bring the Coachella Valley into attainment with this standard.

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**Public Agency Approving Project:** South Coast Air Quality Management District

**Agency Carrying Out Project:** South Coast Air Quality Management District

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**Exempt Status:**  
CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption  
CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

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**Reasons why project is exempt:** South Coast AQMD staff has reviewed the proposed project pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15002 (k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA and CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Because the proposed project is administrative and procedural in nature, South Coast AQMD staff has determined that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. The proposed project is also considered categorically exempt because it is intended to further protect or enhance the environment pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Action by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment. Further, South Coast AQMD staff has determined that there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemption apply to the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions.

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**Date When Project Will Be Considered for Approval (subject to change):**  
South Coast AQMD Governing Board Hearing: June 7, 2019; South Coast AQMD Headquarters

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<b>CEQA Contact Person:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Fax:</b>
Ms. Barbara Radlein	(909) 396-2716	<a href="mailto:bradlein@aqmd.gov">bradlein@aqmd.gov</a>	(909) 396-3982

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<b>Rule Contact Person:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Fax:</b>
Mr. Zorik Pirveysian	(909) 396-2431	<a href="mailto:zpirveysian@aqmd.gov">zpirveysian@aqmd.gov</a>	(909) 396-3324

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**Date Received for Filing:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ *(Signed Upon Board Approval)*  
Barbara Radlein  
Program Supervisor, CEQA  
Planning, Rule Development, and Area  
Sources