

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

To: County Clerks for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino; and Governor's Office of Planning and Research – State Clearinghouse
From: South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Project Title: Coachella Valley Attainment Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard (Coachella Valley Ozone Plan)

Project Location: The location of the proposed project is the portion of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) jurisdiction covering the federal nonattainment area known as the Coachella Valley, which consists of the Riverside County portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin, excluding tribal lands.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: In November 2022, South Coast AQMD requested that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) reclassify the Coachella Valley from “severe-15” to “extreme” nonattainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) with a new attainment date of July 20, 2032. The reclassification requires a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision to address new requirements associated with the reclassification. The Coachella Valley Ozone Plan has been developed to satisfy those requirements and includes: 1) ozone precursors emissions inventory for base year, 2018 and future milestone years; 2) a strategy to demonstrate attainment by continued implementation of adopted rules and regulations; 3) a demonstration of compliance with other federal Clean Air Act requirements; and 4) air quality modeling to demonstrate attainment of the 2008 8-hour ozone standard in Coachella Valley by 2031. Implementation of the Coachella Valley Ozone Plan will result in emission reductions of 12.5 and 1.9 tons per day, of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) respectively, from 2018 base year to the 2031 attainment scenario in the Coachella Valley.

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

Reasons why project is exempt: South Coast AQMD, as Lead Agency, has reviewed the proposed project (Coachella Valley Ozone Plan) pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Since the South Coast AQMD is proposing an attainment strategy which relies on the continued implementation of previously adopted rules and regulations and does not propose new requirements which will result in additional physical modifications, no adverse environmental impacts are expected. Thus, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may cause a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. The proposed project is also categorically exempt because it is intended to further protect or enhance the environment pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment. Further, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions apply to the proposed project.

Date of Project Approval: South Coast AQMD Governing Board Public Hearing: October 4, 2024

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Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature: _____



October 4, 2024

Kevin Ni
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Planning, Rule Development, and Implementation