

**CEQA Program, Notice of Exemption  
Standard Operating Procedure**  
November 19, 2024

This Notice of Exemption (NOE) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes (1) the California Environmental Quality Act's (CEQA) requirements for preparing an NOE, (2) the CEQA Program's instructions for completing an NOE with the intent to rely on it, and (3) the filing of an NOE with the State Clearinghouse (SCH).

This SOP does not review the basis by which CalGEM may find a Project (within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines section 15378) to be exempt or CalGEM's responsible agency (RA) review of Projects that were determined to be exempt by a lead agency (LA). This information can be found in the "CEQA Program, Lead Agency Preliminary Review Standard Operating Procedure" and the "CEQA Program Responsible Agency Review Standard Operating Procedure" on the CEQA Program's SharePoint site.

## **I. CEQA Requirements for Exempting a Potential Project from CEQA Review**

When a public agency decides that a Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR § 15061, and the public agency approves or determines to carry out the Project, the agency may file a Notice of Exemption (14 CCR § 15062). The filing of an NOE with the SCH is optional; however, doing so sets the statute of limitations period on legal challenges to the agency's decision that the Project is exempt from CEQA to 35 days. If a Lead Agency (LA) does not file an NOE with the SCH, the statute of limitations is 180 days (14 CCR § 15062).

If a LA elects to file an NOE with the SCH, CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15062 states that a notice shall include:

1. A brief description of the Project,
2. The location of the Project (either by street address and cross street for a Project in an urbanized area or by attaching a specific map, preferably a copy of a U.S.G.S. 15' or 7- 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name),
3. A finding that the Project is exempt from CEQA, including a citation to the CEQA Guidelines section or statute under which it is assessed to be exempt,
4. A brief statement of reasons to support the finding.
5. The applicant's name, if any.
6. If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the Project which is supported, in whole or in part, through contracts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies or the identity of the person receiving a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use from one or more public agencies.

While there is no time requirement to file an NOE with the SCH, it is CalGEM's policy to file an NOE on a Project within five business days of permit issuance or Project approval by CalGEM. If CEQA Program staff miss the 5-day deadline, then staff should consult with the CEQA Program Senior assigned to the Project.

A sample NOE is provided in CEQA Guidelines Appendix E, Notice of Exemption. CalGEM's NOE Template is a modified version of the CEQA Guidelines Appendix E, specialized for CalGEM's use.

## II. Instructions for Completing a CalGEM NOE Template

The CEQA Program has one all-purpose NOE Template (Template) and a few Templates for specific types of projects, such as reworks and sidetracks, to use for filing an NOE with the SCH. The Templates should be suitable for all CalGEM's projects, however, if a Project does not fit into one of the Templates, consult with the CEQA Program Senior assigned to the Project.

When drafting an NOE using a Template follow the instructions in the Template and complete the sections in blue font. As noted on the Template, text in green is used as an example of the type of information that should go in that section of the Template. Prior to submitting an NOE for internal review, delete all blue and green text in the document.

Sections of the NOE Template to be completed:

**Project Title:** This is the name of the Project as it appears in either the preliminary review (PR) of the Project or in the Excel Tracker.

**Project Applicant:** For oil, gas and geothermal Projects, the Project applicant will be the name of the operator. For State Plug and Abandonment Projects the applicant is the Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division. For Rulemakings this line is deleted as the Project is a regulatory action, therefore there is no applicant to name.

**Project Location:** Include the county in which the Project is located. If more than one county, include the name of all counties. If the location is statewide, as is case for regulatory Projects, list statewide. If the Project is in one or more oil fields list the name of each oil field. If the Project consists of one or more wells, list the Public Land Survey System, section, township and range, and the latitude and longitude of the first well location in the Project.

**Project Description:** Draft a project description using the project description submitted with the application for the Project or one that has been drafted internally by CalGEM for the Project. Include the length and duration of project activities in the project description. If the Project consists of one or more wells, list in the table on the form, the American Petroleum Institute (API) number and well name for each well.

**Exempt Status:** The Template lists exemptions that CalGEM most often relies upon to exempt a Project from further review. If staff does not see the exemption(s) listed that apply to Project, staff may add the exemption(s) under either Statutory Exemption or Categorical Exemption. Check the box for each exemption applied to the exemption of the Project. Often CalGEM relies on more than one exemption for a Project, so it is likely that more than one exemption box will be checked.

**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:** If a PR was completed for the Project, use the rationale that supports each applicable exemption from the PR to complete this section. If a PR was not completed for the Project, follow the instructions on the Template, using the example text as a guide, to explain how a Project fits the regulatory requirements of the exemption applied.

**Certified and Date:** When the NOE is final and set to be filed with the SCH, staff certifies the form by adding their name and the date they completed the NOE.

When staff has completed the NOE Template for a Project, staff will send the NOE to Legal for review. To do this staff will (1) add the review of the NOE to the "CEQA-Legal Request Log" (priority number will be the same as the one assigned in the Tracker) and send an email to the assigned attorney to review the NOE. The assigned attorney will review the NOE. Once complete, staff will review the attorney's edits and comments and finalize the NOE to file with the SCH.

### III. Filing an NOE with the State Clearinghouse

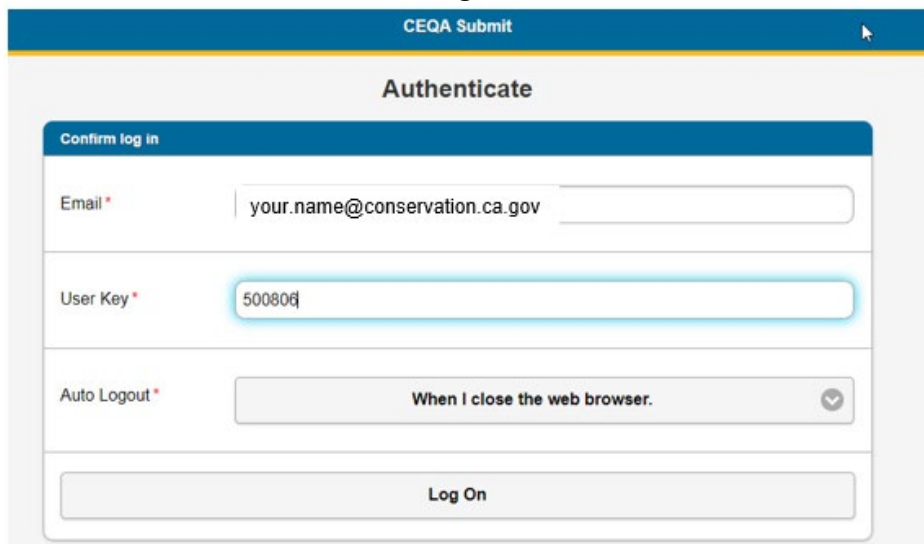
Once an NOE is finalized, staff should file the NOE with the SCH within five business days of permit issuance or approval for the Project. While the five-day time frame is not a statutory requirement, it is CalGEM's policy to file an NOE within that time.

Make a .pdf copy of the NOE and follow the instructions in Attachment 1. Steps to File an NOE with the State Clearinghouse. After the NOE has been submitted to the SCH, the SCH will follow up with the submitter via email once the notice has been posted on CEQA net. Save a copy of the email along with the pdf copy of the signed NOE to the Project folder where the documents will become part of the Administrative Record for the Project.

## Attachment 1. Steps to File an NOE with the State Clearinghouse

Log into your account on CEQA Submit and request a key. <https://ceqasubmit.opr.ca.gov>  
The State Clearinghouse (SCH) will send an email with a set of numbers (key); enter the numbers into the User Key box. Then click on “Log On” button (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. CEQA Submit Authenticate and Log-in**



The screenshot shows the 'Authenticate' page of the CEQA Submit system. At the top is a blue header with 'CEQA Submit'. Below it is a white box titled 'Authenticate'. Inside this box is a 'Confirm log in' section with three input fields: 'Email' (containing 'your.name@conservation.ca.gov'), 'User Key' (containing '500806'), and 'Auto Logout' (set to 'When I close the web browser.'). A 'Log On' button is at the bottom of the form.

On the next page, click on “Add Document” (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Add Document**



The screenshot shows the 'Add Document' page of the CEQA Submit system. At the top is a blue header with 'CEQA Submit'. Below it is the official seal of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State of California. Below the seal is the 'CEQA Submit' logo. The main content area is a white box with a 'Start' section containing four links: 'Add Document', 'My Documents' (with a '66' badge and a right arrow), 'Find Document' (with a right arrow), and 'Request Access' (with a '5 Approved' badge and a right arrow).

On the next page click on “Add New Project – Generate SCH Number” if the NOE is not associated with an environmental document (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Add New Project – Generate SCH Number**

**CEQA Submit**

**Add Document**

Select an Option

Existing Project - Enter SCH Number

Add New Project - Generate SCH Number

On the next page click on “NOE – Notice of Exemption” (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Select Document Type: NOE – Notice of Exemption**

**CEQA Submit**

**Select a Document Type to Add**

Q Filter Document Types...

Document Types

NOD - Notice of Determination

NOE - Notice of Exemption

NEG - Negative Declaration

MND - Mitigated Negative Declaration

On the next page enter the name of the Project on the “Title” and “Document Description.” The “Title” is the “Project Title” name on the NOE. “Document Description” is the “Project Description” on the NOE. Then click “Save & Continue” (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Add Document & Project**

**CEQA Submit**

**Add Document & Project**

Public Agency \*

(Select an Agency) ▼

Document Type \*

Notice of Exemption (NOE) ▼

Title \*

Enter Project Title - Do Not Insert Document Type

Document Description \*

Enter the most recent description of the proposed project – this will be displayed as the overall project summary on CEQAnet.

Cancel

Save & Continue

The next page that will appear is the Document Root page. On this page you will complete information for the following sections: Complete the following sections:

- Attachments
- Contact, Counties
- Location Details
- Notice of Exemption
- Action (which you'll complete last)

Click on Attachments (Upload Project Documents) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Document Root**

**CEQA Submit**

### Document Root

**Selected Document**  
(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01  
California Department of Conservation (DOC)  
Created - 11/28/2023  
Your Name  
**Unsubmitted**

- + Navigation
- + Actions
- + Project Details
- + Document Details
- + Attachments (Upload Project Documents) 0
- + Contacts 0
- + Regions 0
- + Counties 0
- + Cities 0
- + Location Details
- + Notice of Exemption 0
- + County Clerk(s) 0



On the Attachment Add page, upload a .pdf copy of the signed NOE by either dragging and dropping the file to the "Select File(s) to Upload" box or click on "Choose Files" and upload the NOE. Check the ADA box then "Upload" button (Figure 7). Once the file is uploaded click the Back button, which will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 6).

**Figure 7. Attachment Add**

**CEQA Submit**

**Attachment Add**

**Selected Document**

**(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01**  
California Department of Conservation (DOC)  
Created - 11/28/2023  
Your Name  
**Unsubmitted**

Select File(s) to Upload:  
**Choose Files** No file chosen

Category \*  
(Categorize each individual or batch of supporting documents)

☐ **Attachments will be published on CEQANet with this document. State and federal agencies must comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act for documents posted and made available on internet websites. Local agencies must comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act for documents posted and made available on internet websites.**

**Back** **Upload**

**Note:**

- Attachments will be published on the portal with this document. Any attachment submitted through CEQA Submit must be made accessible to those with disabilities. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) accepts no responsibility for the content or accessibility of this document.

**To Prevent Delays:**

- Ensure the [required](#) documents are uploaded
- Ensure all supporting documents are uploaded in a single submission
- Ensure all uploads are categorized correctly
- Ensure all **uploads** and **scanned** documents are [Optical Character Recognition](#) (OCR)
- Drag and drop functionality does not work for folders. If required, create an archive (example...[A zip folder](#))
- Reference the [CEQA Database User Guide](#) (Quick Resource Guide section)



From the Document Root page, click on Contacts. The information you enter here will appear with the NOE listing on the SCH website. Some of the information to complete this section can be found on the completed NOE for the Project (Figure 8).

**Full Name:** Your first and last name

**Authority:** Department of Conservation, CA Geological Energy Management Division

**Job Title:** Your civil service classification. i.e., environmental planner, associate governmental program analyst, environmental biologist.

**Phone:** Use CalGEM's main line (916) 445 - 9686. NOT YOUR WORK NUMBER.

**Email:** Use the CEQA Program email address: CEQA@conservation.ca.gov NOT YOUR conservation email address.

**Address:** Use DOC HQ. 715 P Street, MS 1803

**City:** Sacramento

**State:** CA

**Zip:** 95814

**Contact Types:** Lead Agency

Click Save and then the Back button, which will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 6).

**Figure 8. Add Contact**

The screenshot shows a web form titled "CEQA Submit" with a sub-header "Add Contact". At the top, a box labeled "Selected Document" displays "(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01", "California Department of Conservation (DOC)", "Created - 11/28/2023", and "Your Name" with an "Unsubmitted" status button. Below this, the form contains several input fields: "Full Name \*" (placeholder: "Your name"), "Authority \*" (placeholder: "Department of Conservation, CA Geological Energy Management Division"), "Job Title \*" (placeholder: "Your civil service classification"), "Phone \*" (placeholder: "(916) 445-9686"), "Email \*" (placeholder: "CEQA@conservation.ca.gov"), "Address 1 \*" (placeholder: "715 P Street, MS 1803"), "Address 2" (empty), "City \*" (placeholder: "Sacramento"), "State \*" (dropdown menu showing "California"), and "Zip Code \*" (placeholder: "95814"). At the bottom, a section for "Contact Types: (Select all that apply) \*" includes four checkboxes: "Lead/Public Agency" (checked), "Project Applicant", "Parties Undertaking Project", and "Responsible Agency". The form concludes with "Back" and "Save" buttons.

From the Document Root page, click on Counties. Check the county in which the Project is located. If more than one county, check all counties that apply. Information is on the NOE Template for the Project and can also be found in WellSTAR (Figure 9). Click Save and then the Back button, which will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 6).

**Figure 9. Counties**

The screenshot shows a web form titled "CEQA Submit" with a sub-header "Counties". Below this is a "Selected Document" section containing the text: "(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01", "California Department of Conservation (DOC)", "Created - 11/28/2023", and "Your Name". An "Unsubmitted" status label is in the top right of this section. Below the document info are "Back" and "Save" buttons. The "Save" button is highlighted with a blue border. Underneath is a search bar labeled "Filter Counties...". Below the search bar is a section titled "Counties: (Select all that apply)" containing a list of California counties, each with an unchecked checkbox: Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, and El Dorado.

CEQA Submit	
Counties	
<b>Selected Document</b>	
(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01	
California Department of Conservation (DOC)	Unsubmitted
Created - 11/28/2023	
Your Name	
Back	Save
Filter Counties...	
Counties: (Select all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alameda
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alpine
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amador
<input type="checkbox"/>	Butte
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calaveras
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colusa
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contra Costa
<input type="checkbox"/>	Del Norte
<input type="checkbox"/>	El Dorado

From the Document Root page, click on Location Details. Add the location details that apply to the Project. In most cases you will complete the following:

**Coordinates:** Latitude and Longitude for the first well in the Project. Information is on the NOE for the Project and can also be found in WellSTAR.

**Section, Township and Range:** For the first well location in the Project. Find in WellSTAR (Figure 10).

Click Save and then the Back button, which will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 6).

**Figure 10. Location Details**

The screenshot shows a web form titled "CEQA Submit" with a sub-header "Location Details". The form is for a "Selected Document" identified as "(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01", created on 11/28/2023 by "Your Name". A status indicator shows "Unsubmitted". The form contains several input fields: "Cross Streets" (example: Lee Road and West Beach Street), "Coordinates" (examples: 38.3326, 121.4547; 38 19 57.4, 121 27 16.9), "Zip Code" (example: 95814), "Total Acres" (example: 10), "Jobs" (prompt: Enter number of potential jobs created by project), "Parcel Number" (example: 018-391-03), "State Highways" (prompt: Enter State Highway within 2 miles), "Railways" (prompt: Enter Railways within 2 miles), "Airports" (prompt: Enter Airports within 2 miles), "Schools" (prompt: Enter Schools within 2 miles), "Waterways" (prompt: Enter Waterways within 2 miles), "Township" (example: 31N), "Range" (example: 4W), "Section" (example: 14), "Base", "Other Location Info", and "Other Information". At the bottom are "Back" and "Save" buttons.

CEQA Submit	
Location Details	
<b>Selected Document</b>	
(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01	
California Department of Conservation (DOC)	
Created - 11/28/2023	
Your Name	
Unsubmitted	
Cross Streets	example... Lee Road and West Beach Street
Coordinates	examples... 38.3326, 121.4547; 38 19 57.4, 121 27 16.9
Zip Code	example... 95814
Total Acres	example... 10
Jobs	Enter number of potential jobs created by project
Parcel Number	example... 018-391-03
State Highways	Enter State Highway within 2 miles
Railways	Enter Railways within 2 miles
Airports	Enter Airports within 2 miles
Schools	Enter Schools within 2 miles
Waterways	Enter Waterways within 2 miles
Township	example... 31N
Range	example... 4W
Section	example... 14
Base	
Other Location Info	
Other Information	
Back Save	

From the Document Root page, click on Notice of Exemption. Enter each exemption from the NOE Template that was applied to the Project on the Exemption page. The page allows one exemption entry at a time, so once you've entered an exemption, click Save and Back. From the Document Root page, click Notice of Exemption to add another exemption (Figures 11a, 11b, and 11c).

For each exemption complete the following using the information in the "Reasons Why Project is Exempt" in the Project's NOE Template.

**Exemption Status:** From the dropdown menu select Statutory Exemption or Categorical Exemption.

**Type, Section Number or Code Number:** Enter the statute or code section for the applicable exemption.

**Reasons why the project is exempt:** Copy and paste the whole reason for each exemption from the "Reasons Why Project is Exempt" in the Project's NOE Template.

Once all exemptions have been entered, click Save and then the Back button, which will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 6).

**Figure 11a. Add Exemption Status**

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Add Exemption Status" under the "CEQA Submit" header. The form contains the following elements:

- Selected Document:** A box showing "(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01", "California Department of Conservation (DOC)", "Created - 11/28/2023", and "Your Name". An "Unsubmitted" button is in the top right corner.
- Exempt Status \*:** A dropdown menu with the placeholder text "(Select an Exempt Status)".
- Type, Section Number or Code Number \*:** A text input field with placeholder text "examples...Class 4; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15304".
- Reasons why project is exempt \*:** A text input field with placeholder text "example...This project involves minor private alterations, which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees, or adversely impact sensitive plant or wildlife species."
- Navigation:** "Back" and "Save" buttons at the bottom left.

Figure 11b. Notice of Exemption: Add additional NOEs

CEQA Submit

Notice of Exemption

Selected Document

(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01

California Department of Conservation (DOC)

Created - 11/28/2023

Your Name

Unsubmitted

+ Add Exemption Status

Select an Exemption Status

Statutory Exemption

Emergency Projects PRC § 21080(b)(4); 14 CCR § 15269(c)

As the CEQA lead agency for the proposed Project, CalGEM has determined that the proposed Project is exempt from further environ...

Figure 11c. Notice of Exemption: Completed

CEQA Submit

Notice of Exemption

Selected Document

(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01

California Department of Conservation (DOC)

Created - 11/28/2023

Your Name

Unsubmitted

+ Add Exemption Status

Select an Exemption Status

Categorical Exemption

14 CCR § 15301

Class 1 – Existing Facility: The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the "Class 1" (14 CCR § 15301) exemption ...

Categorical Exemption

14 CCR § 15302

Class 2 – Replacement or Reconstruction: The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the "Class 2" (14 CCR § 15...

Categorical Exemption

14 CCR § 15303

Class 3 – New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures: The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the "Clas...

Categorical Exemption

14 CCR § 15307

Class 7 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources: The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQ...

Categorical Exemption

14 CCR § 15308

Class 8 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment: The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA ...

Statutory Exemption

PRC § 21080(b)(4); 14 CCR § 15269(c)

Emergency Projects: As the CEQA lead agency for the proposed Project, CalGEM has determined that the proposed Project is exempt...

From the Document Root page, click on Action and select Submit Document (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Action: Submit Document**

CEQA Submit

Document Root

**Selected Document**

(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01  
California Department of Conservation (DOC)  
Created - 11/28/2023  
Your Name

Unsubmitted

+ Navigation

- Actions

✓ Submit Document

🗑 Delete Document

On the next page check the box that you understand the document will become part of the public record and the box that you certify that the attached document is true and correct. Next click Confirm Submit, doing so will take you back to the Document Root page (Figure 13).

**Figure 13. Submit Document**

CEQA Submit

Submit Document

**Selected Document**

(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01  
California Department of Conservation (DOC)  
Created - 11/28/2023  
Your Name

Unsubmitted

☐ I understand that this document will become part of the public record.

☐ I certify that the attached document is true and correct.  
I understand that the date of posting on CEQAnet is deemed to be the date of public posting under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Note: The date a document is published to CEQAnet is deemed to be the date of public posting under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Cancel Confirm Submit

At the top of the Document Root page, you'll see that the document has been submitted. The filing process is completed. You can logoff CEQA Submit or file another document with the SCH (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Document Submitted: Document Root (Read Only)**

CEQA Submit

### Document Root (Read-Only)

**Selected Document**  
(New SCH Number) - NOE - OG Oil Inc. 102003-01  
California Department of Conservation (DOC)  
Created - 11/28/2023  
Your Name  
**Submitted**

- + Navigation
- + Actions
- + Project Details
- + Document Details
- + Attachments (Upload Project Documents) 1
- + Contacts 1
- + Regions 0
- + Counties 1
- + Cities 0
- + Location Details
- + Notice of Exemption 6
- + County Clerk(s) 0