

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: October 16-17, 2025

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 2.2c.(3), Action

Prepared By: Cherry Zamora
Associate Deputy Director

Published Date: October 3, 2025

Subject: Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding – Albion River Bridge Project, Resolution E-25-59

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), approve the attached Resolution E-25-59 (Attachment A), which accepts the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Albion River Bridge Project (Project) in Mendocino County; approves the Project for future consideration of funding; makes CEQA Findings (Attachment C); and adopts a Statement of Overriding Considerations (Attachment D).

Issue:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the CEQA Lead Agency for the Project. The Project is located on State Route 1 from post mile 43.3 to post mile 44.2 in Mendocino County. The Project would replace the existing Albion River Bridge with a new bridge.

For all projects that are seeking funding through a program under the purview of the Commission, full compliance with CEQA is required. The Commission will not allocate funds to projects for design, right-of-way, or construction until the environmental document is complete, and the Commission has approved the environmentally cleared project for future consideration of funding.

Background:

On August 15, 2025, Caltrans certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Project. Caltrans found that the Project would have significant and unavoidable impacts on aesthetics and cultural resources, specifically, the Albion River Bridge. These impacts would remain significant and unavoidable even with implementation of mitigation, including applying

aesthetic treatment and landscape amenities on the new bridge and recordation of the historic bridge.

Resources that require mitigation to reduce impacts to less than significant levels include biological resources and archaeological resources. Mitigation measures include: development and implementation of a Marine Animal Monitoring Plan, offsetting impacts to federally and state-listed fish species at mitigation ratios to be identified in applicable permit(s), purchasing of credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participation in off-site mitigation, deployment of soil (sand) protection timber crane mats, placement of temporary trestle piles and permanent bridge foundations outside of eelgrass habitat (where feasible), installation and removal of temporary trestle piles during outgoing tides (when feasible), restoration of wetlands and other waters temporarily disturbed to their natural contours for revegetation, adherence to the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy, marking of environmentally sensitive areas, and implementation of the Cultural Resource Management Plan and Archaeological Monitoring Plan.

The Commission, in its independent judgment as a CEQA responsible agency, has reviewed and considered the Final Environmental Impact Report prepared by Caltrans. The Commission's Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, included in Attachment C and Attachment D, respectively, have been prepared pursuant to CEQA.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Resolution
- Attachment B: Notice of Determination
- Attachment C: California Transportation Commission - Findings
- Attachment D: California Transportation Commission - Statement of Overriding Considerations
- Attachment E: Lead Agency Request for Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding Resolution E-25-59
 - Attachment 1: Map
 - Attachment 2: California Department of Transportation -- Findings
 - Attachment 3: California Department of Transportation -- Statement of Overriding Considerations

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding

01-MEN-1, PM 43.3/44.2

Resolution E-25-59

- 1.1 WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
- Albion River Bridge Project: US 1, in Mendocino County. Replace the existing Albion River Bridge No. 10-0136, which is located in the community of Albion, California. (PPNO 4490)
- 1.2 WHEREAS**, Caltrans has certified that a Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.4 WHEREAS**, the project will have a significant effect on the environment; and
- 1.5 WHEREAS**, the Commission has made findings as required by California Code of Regulations, section 15096, subdivision (h); and
- 1.6 WHEREAS**, the Commission has adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15093.
- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Commission does hereby approve the above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Transportation Commission
Attn: Cherry Zamora
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-4245

Subject: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

Project Title: Albion River Bridge Project

2015042016	Rachelle Estrada	(707) 441-5930
State Clearinghouse Number	Lead Agency Contact Person	Area Code/Telephone

Project Location (include county): The project is located on State Route 1 from post mile 43.3 to 44.2 in Mendocino County.

Project Description: Replace the existing Albion River Bridge No. 10-0136, which is located in the community of Albion, California, with a new bridge.

This is to advise that the California Transportation Commission has approved the above
(☐ Lead Agency/ ☒ Responsible Agency)
described project on October 16-17, 2025, and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project:

1. The project (☒ will/ ☐ will not) have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☒ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. Mitigation reporting or monitoring plan (☒ was / ☐ was not) adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations (☒ was / ☐ was not) adopted for this project.
6. Findings (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

The above identified document with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at: Caltrans District 1, 1656 Union Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

TANISHA TAYLOR		Executive Director California Transportation Commission
<i>Signature (Public Agency)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>

Date received for filing at LCI:



Project Name: Albion River Bridge Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 01-MEN-1-PM 43.3/44.2
EA: 01-40110
EFIS ID: 0100000154
SCH#: 2015042016

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FINDINGS OF FACT**

FOR

**THE ALBION RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT THAT WOULD REPLACE THE ALBION
RIVER BRIDGE ON STATE ROUTE 1 BETWEEN POST MILES 43.3 AND 44.2 IN
MENDOCINO COUNTY**

The following information is presented to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15091 and 15096, and also title 21, section 1501 et seq. Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the Final EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge is considered a scenic resource in view from the surrounding areas, which would be significantly affected by its removal.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would significantly affect aesthetics due to removal of the Albion River Bridge. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and the no-build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; there were



no feasible alternatives to avoid aesthetic impacts. The arch design of the preferred alternative (Design Option 2B) provides architectural interest, forms a gateway between Albion Cove and Albion Flat, and fits into the natural setting by mimicking the curve of adjacent hills. However, the new bridge would not replace the aesthetic qualities of the existing bridge, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures AMM-AR-1 through AMM-AR-6 (described below). Therefore, though mitigation measures have been incorporated, impacts to aesthetics would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- AMM-AR-1: The potential for glare would be avoided or minimized through the selection of materials and finishes used for bridge construction.
- AMM-AR-2: Aesthetic treatment, such as color and pedestrian railing design, would be applied to the bridge railing to increase its visual compatibility.
- AMM-AR-3: Bridge structures, such as retaining walls and wing walls, would be aesthetically treated with color, texture, and/or patterns to increase the project's visual compatibility with the surrounding environment.
- AMM-AR-4: All disturbed soil areas that were previously vegetated, including temporary access roads, construction easements, and staging areas, would be restored to a natural contour. Disturbed slopes 2:1 and flatter would be planted and seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. Steeper disturbed slopes would be seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. No native plantings at their mature height may block existing views.
- AMM-AR-5: Albion Campground facilities, such as, but not limited to, grass, gravel, and hookups, would be restored or replaced to their original condition if disturbed by construction activities.
- AMM-AR-6: Caltrans would work with community members to offset the project's effects on scenic views, through the incorporation of community input into the identification and design of landscape amenities to enhance views and provide opportunities for passive recreation.

Biological Resources: Special-Status Animal Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:



A variety of special status animal species may be in the project area and could be directly and/or indirectly impacted by the project, resulting in potentially significant impacts. Species include marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, (non-listed Gray Whale [*Eschrichtius robustus*], Harbor Porpoise [*Phocoena Phocoena*], Common Bottlenose Dolphin [*Tursiops truncatus*], Northern Elephant Seal [*Mirounga angustirostris*], and California Sea Lion [*Zalophus californianus*], as well as federally endangered Humpback Whale [*Megaptera novaengliae*] and Southern Resident Killer Whale [*Orcinus orca*] and Killer Whale critical habitat), federally endangered Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), federally threatened and state endangered Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), federally threatened California Coastal (CC) Evolutionary Significant Unit of Chinook Salmon [*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*], federally and state endangered Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), federally threatened Southern Distinct Population Segment of Green Sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and federally Northern California Distinct Population Segment of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*).

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project may significantly affect the species above. To lessen and avoid potential impacts on marine mammals, leatherback sea turtle, and marbled murrelet, which would primarily be through hydro acoustic sound, AMM-BR-6 would be implemented to reduce impacts to fish species, and AMM-BR-10 would be implemented to pursue off site mitigation to offset impacts to fish. With the implementation of these measures impacts to these species would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- AMM-BR-6: A Marine Animal Monitoring Plan would be developed and implemented for marbled murrelets, sea turtles, and marine mammals other than Pacific harbor seal. A biological monitor would be present to monitor for these species during all construction activities that have the potential to produce impulsive hammering sounds within the Albion River channel or Albion Cove, including any vibratory or percussive pile installation, hoe-ramming or jackhammering. The Marine Animal Monitoring Plan would be prepared prior to construction and would include adaptive measures, such as defining a safety zone around in-river activities specific to species or hearing groups. To minimize exposure to marine animals and possible harm from construction activities, no



impact pile driving would be initiated when marine animals are detected within their respective safety zone. In addition, during impact driving, when a marine mammal is detected through on-site monitoring within and identified safety zone, or is about to enter its respective safety zone, pile driving or demolition work would be halted and not resumed until the animal was seen to leave the safety zone on its own, or 30 minutes had elapsed since the animal was last seen.

- AMM-BR-10: Caltrans would pursue feasible mitigation opportunities to offset impacts to federally and state listed fish species at mitigation ratios to be identified in applicable permit(s). Potential options include funding of habitat complexity improvements or salmonid recovery projects within the area.

Improving habitat complexity would involve working with potential partners to improve portions of the Albion River within the project area. This could include adding large woody debris upstream to increase in-stream complexity and cover for migrating fish and/or rearing juveniles (depending on location) and potentially bioengineering the rock wall within portions of the Albion Campground. It could also include removal of the southern pier that falls within the Albion River for the current bridge, which would add available streambed area within the channel.

Alternatively, impacts could be addressed by partially funding an important salmonid recovery project within the Albion basin or the surrounding Hydrologic Unit Code 10 watershed.

Potential partners for fish mitigation projects (fish passage and/or habitat restoration/enhancements) in the Albion River or nearby systems (e.g., Navarro River) include, but may not be limited to: The Nature Conservancy, Mendocino Redwood Company, Trout Unlimited, Inc., and The Conservation Fund.

Biological Resources: Natural Communities

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Sensitive Natural Communities, wetlands, and eelgrass Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (which are also Sensitive Natural Communities), are in the project area and would be directly and/or indirectly impacted by project activities, resulting in potentially significant impacts.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which



avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential for significant impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities, wetlands, and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-BR-1, AMM-BR-2, AMM-BR-3, AMM-BR-4, and AMM-BR-9 would be implemented. With the incorporation of these measures (described below), impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities, wetlands, and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- AMM-BR-1: Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to sensitive natural communities by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through the California Coastal Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and any other administering agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation at an off-site location.
- AMM-BR-2: Soil (sand) protection timber crane mats would be deployed when working adjacent to the channel or below high tide line at low tide, and temporary trestle piles and permanent bridge foundations would be placed outside of eelgrass habitat, where feasible.
- AMM-BR-3: When feasible, temporary trestle piles would be installed and removed during outgoing tides to deflect turbidity away from upstream eelgrass beds.
- AMM-BR-4: Wetlands and other waters temporarily disturbed would be restored to their natural contours for revegetation.
- AMM-BR-8: To ensure "no net loss" of seagrass (surfgrass and eelgrass), all necessary standards outlined in the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy would be followed. This includes the development of a comprehensive mitigation and monitoring plan and associated pre- and post-construction surveys.

If temporarily impacted areas of seagrass do not restore naturally within an agreed-upon timeframe (to be determined during permitting), then adaptive mitigation measures may be implemented. Restoration efforts would likely take



the form of infilling gaps within remaining eelgrass patches. If an impact is determined to have occurred as a result of project construction, any gaps that have developed between the pre- and post-construction surveys that are greater than 1 meter across would be planted. If determined necessary, Caltrans would pursue on-site mitigation with final minimum restoration ratio of 1.2:1. If there are permanent impacts, then Caltrans would mitigation with a final restoration ratio achieving a minimum of 2:1. Restoration options to offset permanent impacts would be developed in coordination with CDFW and National Marine Fisheries Service and could include funding of in-stream efforts within the project area or upstream that increase potential habitat area by removing existing structures currently shading or occupying potential habitat areas (e.g., old wood and concrete piers and/or docks).

- AMM-BR-9: Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to aquatic resources by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through consultation with regulatory agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of approximately 1:1 to 2:1 is expected. Alternatively, a minimum ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation of aquatic resources at an off-site location.

Cultural Resources: Albion River Bridge

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources, would be removed by the project, which results in a Finding of Adverse Effect under 36 Code of Federal Regulations Section 800.5(a)(1) and represents a significant impact.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would have a significant impact on the Albion River Bridge due to its removal. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and the no-build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; therefore,



there were no feasible alternatives that would avoid effects to the bridge. AMM-CR-3 (described below) would be implemented to address the adverse effects to the bridge. However, even with implementation of mitigation, the effects would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- AMM-CR-3: To address adverse effects to the historic bridge, Caltrans would initiate historic bridge recordation using Level I or II Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, with copies held at local historical repositories and made available to the public. The HAER documentation would follow National Park Service guidelines for formal archival documentation, which consists of measured and interpretive drawings, historical reports, and large-format photographs.

Additional treatment measure to address adverse effects include:

1. An interpretive exhibit near or on the new bridge. The exhibit would include interpretive panels and one model to scale of the Albion River Bridge. The interpretive panels would focus on the history of the Albion River Bridge.
2. A short documentary film that would document the evolution and construction of the Albion River Bridge and the greater Albion community. The film would be available for viewing on a Caltrans supported website and be made available for educational and interpretive purposes by the public.
3. A model to scale of the existing Albion River Bridge would be developed; the three-dimensional model shall be used to develop the physical model to the scale of the Albion River Bridge that will be included with the interpretive panels as part of the exhibit. Additionally, the digital model shall be provided to the public on a Caltrans supported website.

Following public input and consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and consulting parties, treatment measures were finalized and documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).

Cultural Resources: Archaeological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

There are portions of three unevaluated archaeological sites within the project area that may be affected by the project. A phased approach would be taken for identification, evaluation, and application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect consistent with Stipulation



XII.A of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement due to restricted access in the project area.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential to have significant impacts to archaeological resources. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-CR-1, AMM-CR-2, and AMM-CR-4 would be implemented (described below). A project-specific phased Programmatic Agreement with attached Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and Archaeological Monitoring Plan have been prepared and would be followed. With the implementation of the measures, impacts to archaeological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- AMM-CR-1: Known cultural resources, not located in the area of direct impact of the proposed project, will be protected by temporary high visibility fencing and marked as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA). The ESA would also be included on the construction plans. Protocols for the establishment of ESAs and procedures in the event of an inadvertent breach of an ESA have been documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP), developed in consultation with the California SHPO and attached to the Phased Programmatic Agreement (PA) (see AMM-CR-2).
- AMM-CR-2: Caltrans will implement the CRMP, which is an attachment to the Phased PA, once access to the resources is obtained. The CRMP guides the further evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H (P-23-00516), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and a prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-005484]) which will be completed prior to construction in these areas. The CRMP outlines a Phased Identification approach and process through which a Finding of Effect for these sites will be determined in consultation with the SHPO and other consulting parties. The procedures for addressing an inadvertent discovery are also included in the CRMP.
- AMM-CR-4: In consultation with SHPO, Caltrans has prepared an Archaeological Monitoring Plan, which is included in the CRMP and attached to the Phased PA. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be implemented during any ground disturbing activities and during construction. This plan includes establishing



Resource Monitoring Areas (RMAs) and having an archaeologist and Tribal representative monitor job site activities with the RMAs to identify any undiscovered resources, unanticipated effects, and to inform tribal communities that cultural resources being protected by ESAs remain effective. No work can be conducted within the RMAs unless archaeological and Tribal monitors are both present. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be updated following further investigation and evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H [P-23-005516]), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-00584]) as agreed upon in the PA if needed, guided by the CRMP.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Documents or other material which constitute the record of the proceedings upon which the California Transportation Commission's decision is based are available at: Caltrans District 1 Office at 1656 Union Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

Tanisha Taylor

Executive Director

Signature

Date



Project Name: Albion River Bridge Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 01-MEN-1-PM 43.3/44.2
EA: 01-40110
EFIS ID: 0100000154
SCH #: 2015042016

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS**

FOR

**THE ALBION RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT THAT WOULD REPLACE THE ALBION
RIVER BRIDGE ON STATE ROUTE 1 BETWEEN POST MILES 43.3 AND 44.2 IN
MENDOCINO COUNTY**

The following information is presented to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15091 and 15096, and also title 21, section 1501 et seq. Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The California Transportation Commission (Commission), in its independent judgment as a CEQA responsible agency, reviewed and considered the Final EIR prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and finds that the Final EIR contains a complete, objective, and substantiated reporting of the project's potential impacts.

The following impacts have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

- **Aesthetics:** The project would require the removal of the Albion River Bridge, which is considered a scenic resource in views from the surrounding areas. Under CEQA, a significant impact could occur if a project would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, or substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views in non-urbanized areas. Given the aesthetics of the bridge, removal of the bridge would remain substantial and adverse even with the implementation of mitigation measures because the project could not replace the aesthetic qualities of the existing bridge.
- **Cultural Resources:** The project would require the removal of the Albion River Bridge, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the



California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). Under CEQA, a significant impact would occur if a proposed project causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource such as the Albion River Bridge. Because the bridge would be removed and replaced, the project would materially alter the qualities that justify the bridge's eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP and CRHR. Even with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts would remain substantial and adverse.

Overriding considerations that support approval of this recommended project are as follows:

The purpose of the Albion River Bridge Project is to provide a bridge across the Albion River that meets modern seismic safety standards, provides safe and reliable multimodal access, and minimizes ongoing maintenance costs. The proposed project objectives are as follows:

- Eliminate the bridge's structural and seismic deficiencies
- Eliminate the truss main span's fracture critical condition
- Provide shoulder widths consistent with local coastal plan goals
- Provide improved road alignment and sight distance
- Provide safe, multimodal bridge access for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Minimize ongoing maintenance costs
- Minimize traffic delays associated with bridge inspection, maintenance, and repairs
- Improve resilience to sea level rise, storm surges, and tsunamis
- Prevent further preservative treatment leaching from existing bridge timbers
- Minimize construction-related impacts to the community and environment

The project is needed to address functional, safety, and structural deficiencies of the existing bridge.



During project development, a wide range of possible alternatives were considered, identified based on past studies and comments received from stakeholders, including regulatory agencies and the community. Several potential alternatives, including rehabilitation of the existing bridge, were considered but eliminated prior to the preparation of the draft environmental document due to various reasons, including environmental impacts, community impacts, constructability concerns, extensive right of way requirements, and failure to meet most of the basic project objectives.

Three Build Alternatives (with a total of five design options) and a No-Build Alternative were evaluated in the draft environmental document. The Build Alternatives included the following:

- Alternative 1: West Alignment
 - Design Option 1A: Four-span segmental box girder bridge
 - Design Option 1B: Spandrel arch with box girder approaches
- Alternative 2: East Alignment
 - Design Option 2A: Three-span segmental box girder bridge
 - Design Option 2B: Spandrel arch with box girder approaches
- Alternative 3: On-Alignment (Half-Width)
 - Design Option 3A: Four-span box girder bridge

After circulation of the draft environmental document, the Project Development Team—which consisted of an interdisciplinary team with representatives from environmental, project management, project engineering, structures, right of way, and construction—met to discuss the identification of a preferred alternative. Various criteria were used for comparing the proposed alternatives, including environmental and construction considerations, right of way requirements, public input received during circulation of the Draft EIR/EIS, and construction schedule. The preferred alternative would also need to meet the purpose and need of the project.

Alternative 2 (East Alignment), Design Option 2B, was identified as the preferred alternative. This alternative met the purpose and need of the project and, after comparing and weighing various factors, was selected because of primary advantages including those related to fewer environmental impacts in key resource categories, less



constructability concerns, less permanent right of way acquisitions, and lower construction costs. In addition, as an arch-type bridge, it had advantages over the non-arch alternatives (Design Options 1A, 2A, and 3A) related to aesthetics and public and agency preference for an arch structure.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15093(a) states: "If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered 'acceptable'."

Overall the project would:

- Address the critical deficiencies associated with the existing bridge;
- Improve mobility and safety;
- Reduce maintenance activities;
- Remove the pollution burden of the existing bridge; and
- Provide higher resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

For these reasons, and the substantial evidence included in the administrative record as a whole, the Commission finds that the benefits of the proposed project outweigh the projects adverse, significant impacts to the Albion River Bridge related to cultural resources and aesthetics.

Tanisha Taylor

Executive Director

Signature

Date

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 16-17, 2025

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.2c.(3), Action Item

Prepared By: Jeremy Ketchum, Chief
Division of Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
RESOLUTION E-25-59**

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-25-59?

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-25-59.

BACKGROUND:

01-Men-1, PM 43.3/44.2 Resolution E-25-59

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- Albion River Bridge Project: United States Highway (US) 1, in Mendocino County. Replace the existing Albion River Bridge No. 10-0136, which is located in the community of Albion, California. (PPNO 4490)

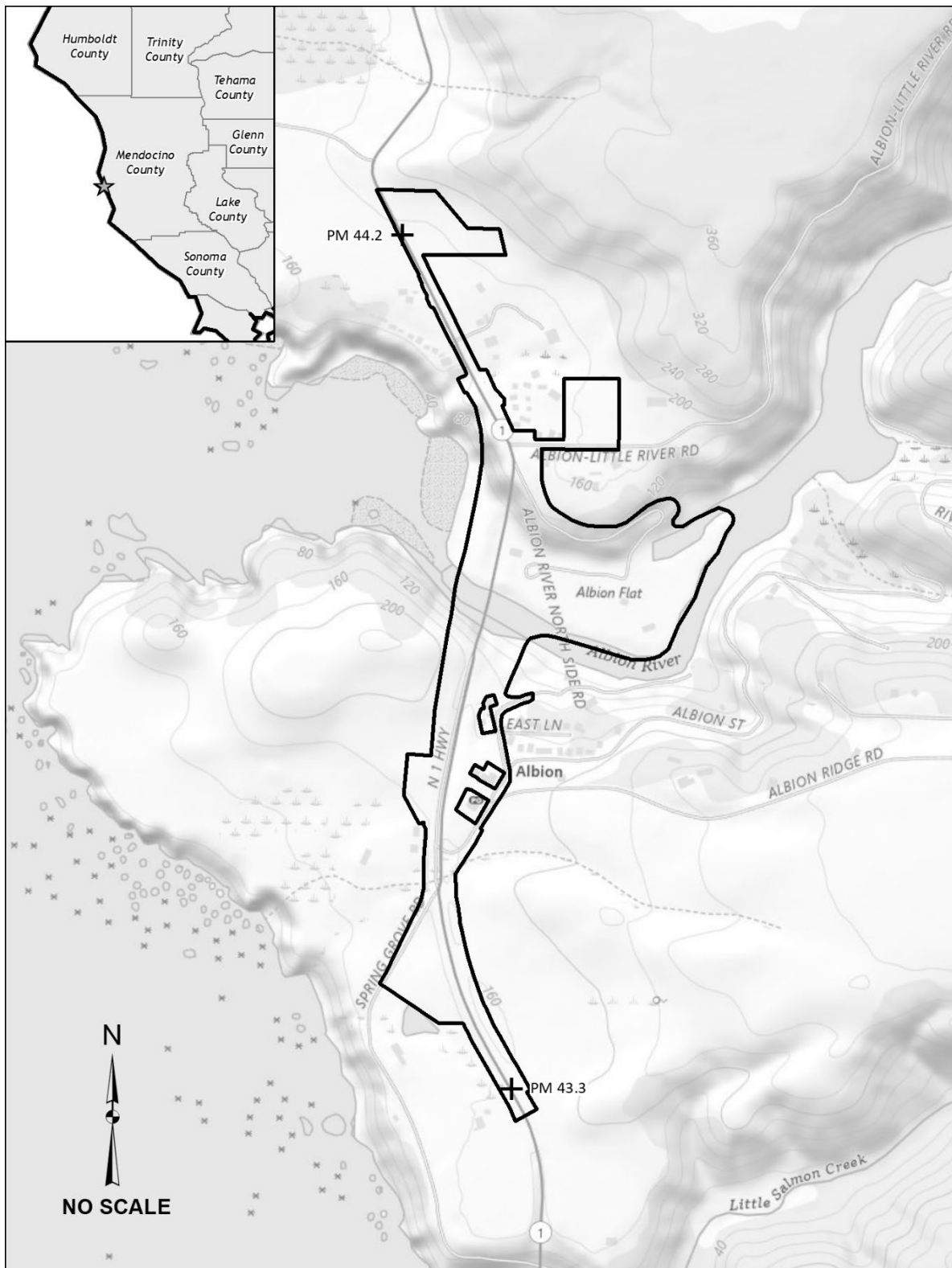
The project is located on US 1 from Post Mile (PM) 43.3 to 44.2, in Mendocino County. The Department proposes to replace the existing Albion River Bridge No. 10-0136, which is located in the community of Albion, California. The project is currently programmed in the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). The total programmed amount which includes Right of Way (Support and Capital), and Construction (Support and Capital) is \$107,207,000. Construction will begin in Fiscal Year 2027-28. The scope, as described for the

preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope as programmed by the Commission in the 2024 SHOPP.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources in the project area that may be significantly impacted by the project, but would have mitigation measures implemented to reduce impacts to less-than-significant, include biological resources and archaeological resources. Mitigation measures will reduce potential effects on biological resources and archaeological resources. These measures include, but are not limited to, development and implementation of a Marine Animal Monitoring Plan, offsetting impacts to federally and state listed fish species at mitigation ratios to be identified in applicable permit(s), purchasing of credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participation in off-site mitigation, deployment of soil (sand) protection timber crane mats, placement of temporary trestle piles and permanent bridge foundations outside of eelgrass habitat (where feasible), installation and removal of temporary trestle piles during outgoing tides (when feasible), restoration of wetlands and other waters temporarily disturbed to their natural contours for revegetation, adherence to the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy, marking of environmentally sensitive areas, and implementation of the Cultural Resource Management Plan and Archaeological Monitoring Plan. Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significant except for aesthetics and cultural resources (specifically, the Albion River Bridge), for which a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act was prepared. Removal of the Albion River Bridge, considered a scenic resource, would significantly impact aesthetics of the area. Additionally, the Albion River Bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources and its removal represents a significant impact. Although mitigation would be implemented, such as applying aesthetic treatment and landscape amenities at the new bridge, and recordation of the historic bridge, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

Attachment 1



Albion River Bridge Project

SR 1 from PM 43.3 to 44.2, in Mendocino County



Project Name: Albion River Bridge Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 01-MEN-1-PM 43.3/44.2
EA: 01-40110
EFIS ID: 0100000154

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINDINGS
FOR
THE ALBION RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT THAT WOULD REPLACE THE ALBION
RIVER BRIDGE ON STATE ROUTE 1 BETWEEN POST MILES 43.3 AND 44.2
IN MENDOCINO COUNTY**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge is considered a scenic resource in views from the surrounding areas, which would be significantly affected by its removal.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would significantly affect aesthetics due to removal of the Albion River Bridge. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and

the no-build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; there were no feasible alternatives to avoid aesthetic impacts. The arch design of the preferred alternative (Design Option 2B) provides architectural interest, forms a gateway between Albion Cove and Albion Flat, and fits into the natural setting by mimicking the curve of adjacent hills. However, the new bridge would not replace the aesthetic qualities of the existing bridge, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures AMM-AR-1 through AMM-AR-6 (described below). Therefore, though mitigation measures have been incorporated, impacts to aesthetics would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- **AMM-AR-1:** The potential for glare would be avoided or minimized through the selection of materials and finishes used for bridge construction.
- **AMM-AR-2:** Aesthetic treatment, such as color and pedestrian railing design, would be applied to the bridge railing to increase its visual compatibility.
- **AMM-AR-3:** Bridge structures, such as retaining walls and wing walls, would be aesthetically treated with color, texture, and/or patterns to increase the project's visual compatibility with the surrounding environment.
- **AMM-AR-4:** All disturbed soil areas that were previously vegetated, including temporary access roads, construction easements, and staging areas, would be restored to a natural contour. Disturbed slopes 2:1 and flatter would be planted and seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. Steeper disturbed slopes would be seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. No native plantings at their mature height may block existing views.
- **AMM-AR-5:** Albion Campground facilities, such as but not limited to, grass, gravel, and hookups, would be restored, or replaced to their original condition if disturbed by construction activities.
- **AMM-AR-6:** Caltrans would work with community members to offset the project's effects on scenic views, through the incorporation of community input into the identification and design of landscape amenities to enhance views and provide opportunities for passive recreation.

Biological Resources: Special-Status Animal Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

A variety of special status animal species may be in the project area and could be directly and/or indirectly impacted by the project, resulting in potentially significant impacts. Species include marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, (non-listed gray whale [*Eschrichtius robustus*], harbor porpoise

[*Phocoena phocoena*], common bottlenose dolphin [*Tursiops truncatus*], northern elephant seal [*Mirounga angustirostris*], and California sea lion [*Zalophus californianus*] as well as federally endangered humpback whale [*Megaptera novaeangliae*] and southern resident killer whale [*Orcinus orca*] and killer whale critical habitat), federally endangered leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), federally threatened and state endangered marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), federally threatened California Coastal (CC) Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), federally and state endangered Central California Coast (CCC) Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), federally threatened Southern DPS of green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and federally threatened Northern California (NC) DPS of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*).

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project may significantly affect the species above. To lessen and avoid potential impacts on marine mammals, leatherback sea turtle, and marbled murrelet, which would primarily be through hydroacoustic sound, AMM-BR-6 would be implemented. To reduce impacts to fish species, AMM-BR-10 would be implemented to pursue offsite mitigation to offset impacts to fish. With the implementation of these measures, impacts to these species would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-BR-6:** A Marine Animal Monitoring Plan (MAMP) would be developed and implemented for marbled murrelets, sea turtles and marine mammals other than Pacific harbor seal. A biological monitor would be present to monitor for these species during all construction activities that have the potential to produce impulsive hammering sounds within the Albion River channel or Albion Cove, including any vibratory or percussive pile installation, hoe-ramming, or jackhammering. The MAMP would be prepared prior to construction and would include adaptive measures, such as defining a safety zone around in-river activities specific to species or hearing groups. To minimize exposure to marine animals and possible harm from construction activities, no impact pile driving would be initiated when marine animals are detected within their respective safety zone. In addition, during impact driving, when a marine mammal is detected through on-site monitoring within an identified safety zone, or is about to enter its respective safety zone, pile driving or demolition work would be halted and not resumed until the animal was seen to leave the safety zone on its own, or 30 minutes had elapsed since the animal was last seen.

- **AMM-BR-10:** Caltrans would pursue feasible mitigation opportunities to offset impacts to federally and state listed fish species at mitigation ratios to be identified in applicable permit(s). Potential options include funding of habitat complexity improvements or salmonid recovery projects within the area.

Improving habitat complexity would involve working with potential partners to improve portions of the Albion River within the project area. This could include adding large woody debris upstream to increase in-stream complexity and cover for migrating fish and/or rearing juveniles (depending on location) and potentially bioengineering the rock wall within portions of the Albion Campground. It could also include removal of the southern pier that falls within the Albion River for the current bridge, which would add available streambed area within the channel.

Alternatively, impacts could be addressed by partially funding an important salmonid recovery project within the Albion basin or the surrounding HUC 10 watershed.

Potential partners for fish mitigation projects (fish passage and/or habitat restoration/enhancements) in the Albion River or nearby systems (e.g., Navarro River) include, but may not be limited to: The Nature Conservancy, Mendocino Redwood Company, Trout Unlimited, Inc., and The Conservation Fund.

Biological Resources: Natural Communities

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Sensitive Natural Communities (SNCs), wetlands, and eelgrass Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) (which are also SNCs), are in the project area and would be directly and/or indirectly impacted by project activities, resulting in potentially significant impacts.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential for significant impacts to SNCs, wetlands, and HAPC. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-BR-1, AMM-BR-2, AMM-BR-3, AMM-BR-4, AMM-BR-9 would be implemented. With the incorporation of these measures (described below), impacts to SNCs, wetlands, and HAPC would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-BR-1:** Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to sensitive natural communities by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through the CCC, USACE, NCRWQCB, CDFW, and any other administering agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of approximately 1:1 to 2:1 is expected. Alternatively, a minimum ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation at an off-site location.
- **AMM-BR-2:** Soil (sand) protection timber crane mats would be deployed when working adjacent to the channel or below high tide line at low tide, and temporary trestle piles and permanent bridge foundations would be placed outside of eelgrass habitat, where feasible.
- **AMM-BR-3:** When feasible, temporary trestle piles would be installed and removed during outgoing tides to deflect turbidity away from upstream eelgrass beds.
- **AMM-BR-4:** Wetlands and other waters temporarily disturbed would be restored to their natural contours for revegetation.
- **AMM-BR-8:** To ensure “no net loss” of seagrass (surfgrass and eelgrass), all necessary standards outlined in the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy (CEMP) would be followed. This includes the development of a comprehensive mitigation and monitoring plan and associated pre- and post-construction surveys.

If temporarily impacted areas of seagrass do not restore naturally within an agreed-upon timeframe (to be determined during permitting), then adaptive mitigation measures may be implemented. Restoration efforts would likely take the form of infilling gaps within remaining eelgrass patches. If an impact is determined to have occurred as a result of project construction, any gaps that have developed between the pre- and post-construction surveys that are greater than 1 meter across would be planted. If determined necessary, Caltrans would pursue on-site mitigation with a final minimum restoration ratio of 1.2:1. If there are permanent impacts, then Caltrans would mitigate with a final restoration ratio achieving a minimum of 2:1. Restoration options to offset permanent impacts would be developed in coordination with CDFW and NMFS and could include funding of in-stream efforts within the project area or upstream that increase potential habitat area by removing existing structures currently shading or occupying potential habitat areas (e.g., old wood and concrete piers and/or docks).

- **AMM-BR-9:** Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to aquatic resources by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through consultation with regulatory agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of approximately

1:1 to 2:1 is expected. Alternatively, a minimum ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation of aquatic resources at an off-site location.

Cultural Resources: Albion River Bridge

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources, would be removed by the project, which results in a Finding of Adverse Effect under 36 CFR Section 800.5(a)(1) and represents a significant impact.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would have a significant impact on the Albion River Bridge due to its removal. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and the no build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; therefore, there were no feasible alternatives that would avoid effects to the bridge. AMM-CR-3 (described below) would be implemented to address the adverse effects to the bridge. However, even with implementation of mitigation, the effects would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- **AMM-CR-3:** To address adverse effects to the historic bridge, Caltrans would initiate historic bridge recordation using Level I or II Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, with copies held at local historical repositories and made available to the public. The HAER documentation would follow National Park Service guidelines for formal archival documentation, which consists of measured and interpretive drawings, historical reports, and large-format photographs.

Additional treatment measures to address adverse effects include:

1. An interpretive exhibit near or on the new bridge. The exhibit would include interpretive panels and one model to scale of the Albion River Bridge. The interpretive panels would focus on the history of the Albion River Bridge.
2. A short documentary film that would document the evolution and construction of the Albion River Bridge and the greater Albion community.

The film would be available for viewing on a Caltrans supported website and be made available for educational and interpretive purposes by the public.

3. A model to scale of the existing Albion River Bridge would be developed; the three-dimensional model shall be used to develop the physical model to scale of the Albion River Bridge that will be included with the interpretive panels as part of the exhibit. Additionally, the digital model shall be provided to the public on a Caltrans supported website.

Following public input and consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and consulting parties, treatment measures were finalized and documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).

Cultural Resources: Archaeological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

There are portions of three unevaluated archaeological sites within the project area that may be affected by the project. A phased approach would be taken for identification, evaluation, and application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect consistent with Stipulation XII.A of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement due to restricted access in the project area.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential to have significant impacts to archaeological resources. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-CR-1, AMM-CR-2, and AMM-CR-4 would be implemented (described below). A project-specific phased Programmatic Agreement with attached Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and Archaeological Monitoring Plan have been prepared and would be followed. With the implementation of the measures, impacts to archeological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-CR-1:** Known cultural resources, not located in the area of direct impact (ADI) of the proposed project, will be protected by temporary high visibility fencing (THVF) and marked as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA). The ESA would also be included on the construction plans. Protocols for the establishment of ESAs and procedures in the event of an inadvertent breach of

an ESA have been documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP), developed in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and attached to the Phased Programmatic Agreement (PA) (see AMM-CR-2).

- **AMM-CR-2:** Caltrans will implement the CRMP, which is an attachment to the Phased PA, once access to the resources is obtained. The CRMP guides the further evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H [P-23-005516]), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and a prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-005484]) which will be completed prior to construction in these areas. The CRMP outlines a Phased Identification approach and process through which a Finding of Effect for these sites will be determined in consultation with the SHPO and other consulting parties. The procedures for addressing an inadvertent discovery are also included in the CRMP.
- **AMM-CR-4:** In consultation with SHPO, Caltrans has prepared an Archaeological Monitoring Plan, which is included in the CRMP and attached to the Phased PA. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be implemented during any ground disturbing activities and during construction. This plan includes establishing Resource Monitoring Areas (RMAs) and having an archaeologist and Tribal representative monitor job site activities within the RMAs to identify any undiscovered resources, unanticipated effects, and to inform tribal communities that cultural resources being protected by ESAs remain effective. No work can be conducted within the RMAs unless archeological and Tribal monitors are both present. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be updated following further investigation and evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H [P-23-005516]), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-00584]) as agreed upon in the PA if needed, guided by the CRMP.

CONCLUSION

Pursuant to Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, decision-makers are required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. If the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.” As the project would have impacts that are significant and unavoidable, a Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared.

For those measures described above that serve to avoid or lessen the significant environmental effects as identified in the FEIR, an Environmental Commitments Record (ECR) has been prepared for the project. The ECR will guide implementation of CEQA project mitigation measures by assigning implementation, monitoring, and reporting responsibilities and specifying timelines.

Caltrans is the custodian of the documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which the findings are based; the documents and other materials are contained at the Caltrans District 1 Office at 1656 Union Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

Tom Fitzgerald for Matt Brady

District Director (or designee)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tom Fitzgerald', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'T' and a cursive 'F'.

Signature

8/15/2025

Date



Project Name: Albion River Bridge Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 01-MEN-1-PM 43.3/44.2
EA: 01-40110
EFIS ID: 0100000154

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINDINGS
FOR
THE ALBION RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT THAT WOULD REPLACE THE ALBION
RIVER BRIDGE ON STATE ROUTE 1 BETWEEN POST MILES 43.3 AND 44.2
IN MENDOCINO COUNTY**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge is considered a scenic resource in views from the surrounding areas, which would be significantly affected by its removal.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would significantly affect aesthetics due to removal of the Albion River Bridge. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and

the no-build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; there were no feasible alternatives to avoid aesthetic impacts. The arch design of the preferred alternative (Design Option 2B) provides architectural interest, forms a gateway between Albion Cove and Albion Flat, and fits into the natural setting by mimicking the curve of adjacent hills. However, the new bridge would not replace the aesthetic qualities of the existing bridge, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures AMM-AR-1 through AMM-AR-6 (described below). Therefore, though mitigation measures have been incorporated, impacts to aesthetics would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- **AMM-AR-1:** The potential for glare would be avoided or minimized through the selection of materials and finishes used for bridge construction.
- **AMM-AR-2:** Aesthetic treatment, such as color and pedestrian railing design, would be applied to the bridge railing to increase its visual compatibility.
- **AMM-AR-3:** Bridge structures, such as retaining walls and wing walls, would be aesthetically treated with color, texture, and/or patterns to increase the project's visual compatibility with the surrounding environment.
- **AMM-AR-4:** All disturbed soil areas that were previously vegetated, including temporary access roads, construction easements, and staging areas, would be restored to a natural contour. Disturbed slopes 2:1 and flatter would be planted and seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. Steeper disturbed slopes would be seeded with regionally appropriate California native species plants. No native plantings at their mature height may block existing views.
- **AMM-AR-5:** Albion Campground facilities, such as but not limited to, grass, gravel, and hookups, would be restored, or replaced to their original condition if disturbed by construction activities.
- **AMM-AR-6:** Caltrans would work with community members to offset the project's effects on scenic views, through the incorporation of community input into the identification and design of landscape amenities to enhance views and provide opportunities for passive recreation.

Biological Resources: Special-Status Animal Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

A variety of special status animal species may be in the project area and could be directly and/or indirectly impacted by the project, resulting in potentially significant impacts. Species include marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, (non-listed gray whale [*Eschrichtius robustus*], harbor porpoise

[*Phocoena phocoena*], common bottlenose dolphin [*Tursiops truncatus*], northern elephant seal [*Mirounga angustirostris*], and California sea lion [*Zalophus californianus*] as well as federally endangered humpback whale [*Megaptera novaeangliae*] and southern resident killer whale [*Orcinus orca*] and killer whale critical habitat), federally endangered leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), federally threatened and state endangered marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), federally threatened California Coastal (CC) Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), federally and state endangered Central California Coast (CCC) Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), federally threatened Southern DPS of green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and federally threatened Northern California (NC) DPS of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*).

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project may significantly affect the species above. To lessen and avoid potential impacts on marine mammals, leatherback sea turtle, and marbled murrelet, which would primarily be through hydroacoustic sound, AMM-BR-6 would be implemented. To reduce impacts to fish species, AMM-BR-10 would be implemented to pursue offsite mitigation to offset impacts to fish. With the implementation of these measures, impacts to these species would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-BR-6:** A Marine Animal Monitoring Plan (MAMP) would be developed and implemented for marbled murrelets, sea turtles and marine mammals other than Pacific harbor seal. A biological monitor would be present to monitor for these species during all construction activities that have the potential to produce impulsive hammering sounds within the Albion River channel or Albion Cove, including any vibratory or percussive pile installation, hoe-ramming, or jackhammering. The MAMP would be prepared prior to construction and would include adaptive measures, such as defining a safety zone around in-river activities specific to species or hearing groups. To minimize exposure to marine animals and possible harm from construction activities, no impact pile driving would be initiated when marine animals are detected within their respective safety zone. In addition, during impact driving, when a marine mammal is detected through on-site monitoring within an identified safety zone, or is about to enter its respective safety zone, pile driving or demolition work would be halted and not resumed until the animal was seen to leave the safety zone on its own, or 30 minutes had elapsed since the animal was last seen.

- **AMM-BR-10:** Caltrans would pursue feasible mitigation opportunities to offset impacts to federally and state listed fish species at mitigation ratios to be identified in applicable permit(s). Potential options include funding of habitat complexity improvements or salmonid recovery projects within the area.

Improving habitat complexity would involve working with potential partners to improve portions of the Albion River within the project area. This could include adding large woody debris upstream to increase in-stream complexity and cover for migrating fish and/or rearing juveniles (depending on location) and potentially bioengineering the rock wall within portions of the Albion Campground. It could also include removal of the southern pier that falls within the Albion River for the current bridge, which would add available streambed area within the channel.

Alternatively, impacts could be addressed by partially funding an important salmonid recovery project within the Albion basin or the surrounding HUC 10 watershed.

Potential partners for fish mitigation projects (fish passage and/or habitat restoration/enhancements) in the Albion River or nearby systems (e.g., Navarro River) include, but may not be limited to: The Nature Conservancy, Mendocino Redwood Company, Trout Unlimited, Inc., and The Conservation Fund.

Biological Resources: Natural Communities

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Sensitive Natural Communities (SNCs), wetlands, and eelgrass Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) (which are also SNCs), are in the project area and would be directly and/or indirectly impacted by project activities, resulting in potentially significant impacts.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential for significant impacts to SNCs, wetlands, and HAPC. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-BR-1, AMM-BR-2, AMM-BR-3, AMM-BR-4, AMM-BR-9 would be implemented. With the incorporation of these measures (described below), impacts to SNCs, wetlands, and HAPC would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-BR-1:** Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to sensitive natural communities by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through the CCC, USACE, NCRWQCB, CDFW, and any other administering agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of approximately 1:1 to 2:1 is expected. Alternatively, a minimum ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation at an off-site location.
- **AMM-BR-2:** Soil (sand) protection timber crane mats would be deployed when working adjacent to the channel or below high tide line at low tide, and temporary trestle piles and permanent bridge foundations would be placed outside of eelgrass habitat, where feasible.
- **AMM-BR-3:** When feasible, temporary trestle piles would be installed and removed during outgoing tides to deflect turbidity away from upstream eelgrass beds.
- **AMM-BR-4:** Wetlands and other waters temporarily disturbed would be restored to their natural contours for revegetation.
- **AMM-BR-8:** To ensure “no net loss” of seagrass (surfgrass and eelgrass), all necessary standards outlined in the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy (CEMP) would be followed. This includes the development of a comprehensive mitigation and monitoring plan and associated pre- and post-construction surveys.

If temporarily impacted areas of seagrass do not restore naturally within an agreed-upon timeframe (to be determined during permitting), then adaptive mitigation measures may be implemented. Restoration efforts would likely take the form of infilling gaps within remaining eelgrass patches. If an impact is determined to have occurred as a result of project construction, any gaps that have developed between the pre- and post-construction surveys that are greater than 1 meter across would be planted. If determined necessary, Caltrans would pursue on-site mitigation with a final minimum restoration ratio of 1.2:1. If there are permanent impacts, then Caltrans would mitigate with a final restoration ratio achieving a minimum of 2:1. Restoration options to offset permanent impacts would be developed in coordination with CDFW and NMFS and could include funding of in-stream efforts within the project area or upstream that increase potential habitat area by removing existing structures currently shading or occupying potential habitat areas (e.g., old wood and concrete piers and/or docks).

- **AMM-BR-9:** Caltrans proposes to compensate for permanent impacts to aquatic resources by purchasing credits from the Mendocino Coast Mitigation Bank and/or participating in off-site mitigation. The appropriate credit ratios would be identified and coordinated through consultation with regulatory agencies during the permitting phase of the project. Caltrans anticipates mitigation credits to be available prior to project impacts; therefore, a mitigation ratio of approximately

1:1 to 2:1 is expected. Alternatively, a minimum ratio of 3:1 would be proposed for restoration and/or preservation of aquatic resources at an off-site location.

Cultural Resources: Albion River Bridge

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Albion River Bridge, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources, would be removed by the project, which results in a Finding of Adverse Effect under 36 CFR Section 800.5(a)(1) and represents a significant impact.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project would have a significant impact on the Albion River Bridge due to its removal. All project build alternatives identified in the EIR would replace the bridge, and the no build alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project; therefore, there were no feasible alternatives that would avoid effects to the bridge. AMM-CR-3 (described below) would be implemented to address the adverse effects to the bridge. However, even with implementation of mitigation, the effects would remain significant and unavoidable. See the Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared for the project for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

- **AMM-CR-3:** To address adverse effects to the historic bridge, Caltrans would initiate historic bridge recordation using Level I or II Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, with copies held at local historical repositories and made available to the public. The HAER documentation would follow National Park Service guidelines for formal archival documentation, which consists of measured and interpretive drawings, historical reports, and large-format photographs.

Additional treatment measures to address adverse effects include:

1. An interpretive exhibit near or on the new bridge. The exhibit would include interpretive panels and one model to scale of the Albion River Bridge. The interpretive panels would focus on the history of the Albion River Bridge.
2. A short documentary film that would document the evolution and construction of the Albion River Bridge and the greater Albion community.

The film would be available for viewing on a Caltrans supported website and be made available for educational and interpretive purposes by the public.

3. A model to scale of the existing Albion River Bridge would be developed; the three-dimensional model shall be used to develop the physical model to scale of the Albion River Bridge that will be included with the interpretive panels as part of the exhibit. Additionally, the digital model shall be provided to the public on a Caltrans supported website.

Following public input and consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and consulting parties, treatment measures were finalized and documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).

Cultural Resources: Archaeological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

There are portions of three unevaluated archaeological sites within the project area that may be affected by the project. A phased approach would be taken for identification, evaluation, and application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect consistent with Stipulation XII.A of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement due to restricted access in the project area.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential to have significant impacts to archaeological resources. To avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources, measures AMM-CR-1, AMM-CR-2, and AMM-CR-4 would be implemented (described below). A project-specific phased Programmatic Agreement with attached Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and Archaeological Monitoring Plan have been prepared and would be followed. With the implementation of the measures, impacts to archeological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

- **AMM-CR-1:** Known cultural resources, not located in the area of direct impact (ADI) of the proposed project, will be protected by temporary high visibility fencing (THVF) and marked as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA). The ESA would also be included on the construction plans. Protocols for the establishment of ESAs and procedures in the event of an inadvertent breach of

an ESA have been documented in the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP), developed in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and attached to the Phased Programmatic Agreement (PA) (see AMM-CR-2).

- **AMM-CR-2:** Caltrans will implement the CRMP, which is an attachment to the Phased PA, once access to the resources is obtained. The CRMP guides the further evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H [P-23-005516]), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and a prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-005484]) which will be completed prior to construction in these areas. The CRMP outlines a Phased Identification approach and process through which a Finding of Effect for these sites will be determined in consultation with the SHPO and other consulting parties. The procedures for addressing an inadvertent discovery are also included in the CRMP.
- **AMM-CR-4:** In consultation with SHPO, Caltrans has prepared an Archaeological Monitoring Plan, which is included in the CRMP and attached to the Phased PA. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be implemented during any ground disturbing activities and during construction. This plan includes establishing Resource Monitoring Areas (RMAs) and having an archaeologist and Tribal representative monitor job site activities within the RMAs to identify any undiscovered resources, unanticipated effects, and to inform tribal communities that cultural resources being protected by ESAs remain effective. No work can be conducted within the RMAs unless archeological and Tribal monitors are both present. The Archaeological Monitoring Plan will be updated following further investigation and evaluation of CA-MEN-3652H [P-23-005516]), historic-era refuse deposits (CA-MEN-3653H), and prehistoric site (CA-MEN-3645 [P-23-00584]) as agreed upon in the PA if needed, guided by the CRMP.

CONCLUSION

Pursuant to Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, decision-makers are required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. If the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.” As the project would have impacts that are significant and unavoidable, a Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared.

For those measures described above that serve to avoid or lessen the significant environmental effects as identified in the FEIR, an Environmental Commitments Record (ECR) has been prepared for the project. The ECR will guide implementation of CEQA project mitigation measures by assigning implementation, monitoring, and reporting responsibilities and specifying timelines.

Caltrans is the custodian of the documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which the findings are based; the documents and other materials are contained at the Caltrans District 1 Office at 1656 Union Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

Tom Fitzgerald for Matt Brady

District Director (or designee)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tom Fitzgerald", is written over a horizontal line.

Signature

8/15/2025

Date