



ORANGE COUNTY  
CLERK-RECORDER  
CEQA FILING COVER SHEET

202585000295

**FILED**

April 10, 2025

HUGH NGUYEN  
CLERK - RECORDER

By *H. Nguyen*  
Deputy clerk

30-04/10/2025-0227

THIS SPACE FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Complete and attach this form to each CEQA Notice filed with the County Clerk-Recorder

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

Project Title

BIG CANYON COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE RENOVATION

Check Document being Filed:

- ☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- ☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
- ☒ Notice of Exemption (NOE)
- ☐ Other (Please fill in type):

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE ORANGE  
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER ON 04/10/2025  
Posted 04/10/2025 Removed \_\_\_\_\_  
Returned to agency on \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPUTY 428

Filing fees are due at the time a Notice of Determination/Exemption is filed with our office. For more information on filing fees and No Effect Determinations, please refer to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 753.5.

## Notice of Exemption

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From: (Public Agency)** City of Newport Beach  
100 Civic Center Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660  
(Address)

County Clerk

County of Orange

211 W Santa Ana Boulevard, #201

Santa Ana, CA 92701

**Project Title:** Big Canyon Country Club Golf Course Renovation

**Project Location – Specific:** One Big Canyon Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660

**Project Location – City:** City of Newport Beach

**Project Location – County:** Orange

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:** Big Canyon Country Club plans to renovate its golf course (1) to fully replace existing irrigation facilities nearing the end of their useful life with a state-of-the-art irrigation system to enable efficient, more targeted irrigation and minimize the potential of overwatering, (2) to correct areas of minor drainage deficiencies, and (3) to update the golf course while the course is closed to play during implementation of the irrigation project.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** City of Newport Beach

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Big Canyon Country Club One Big Canyon Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

**Exempt Status: (check one)**

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));

☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(c));

☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 2 Section 15302 (b)(c)

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:** The proposed project involves the replacement of aged irrigation facilities, correct drainage deficiencies and updating the golf course with no expansion of existing use.

**Lead Agency**

**Contact Person:** Liz Westmoreland, AICP

**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 949.644.3234

**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Signature:** Liz Westmoreland

**Date:** 4-10-25

**Title:** Principal Planner

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

☐ Signed by Applicant

**Date received for filing at OPR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FILED**

APR 10 2025

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY: M.G. DEPUTY

Revised 2005



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE  
CASH RECEIPT**  
DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

Print

StartOver

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RECEIPT NUMBER:

30-04/10/2025-0227

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (If applicable)

**SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.**

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH		04/10/2025
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING	DOCUMENT NUMBER	
ORANGE COUNTY	202585000295	
PROJECT TITLE		

BIG CANYON COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE RENOVATION

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
BIG CANYON COUNTRY CLUB		(949) 644-3234
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE
ONE BIG CANYON DRIVE	NEWPORT BEACH	CA
		ZIP CODE
		92660

**PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)**

☐ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☒ Private Entity

**CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:**

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) \$ 4,123.50 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) \$ 2,968.75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW \$ 1,401.75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Exempt from fee  
☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)  
☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)  
☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) \$ 850.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☒ County documentary handling fee \$ 50.00 \$ 50.00  
☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

☐ Cash ☒ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other **TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 50.00**

SIGNATURE	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
X <i>Melissa Gomez</i>	Melissa Gomez Deputy Clerk



## Big Canyon Country Club Golf Course Renovation

### Class 2 Categorical Exemption Checklist

Applicant:

**Big Canyon Country Club**  
One Big Canyon Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Owner:

**Big Canyon Country Club**  
One Big Canyon Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Project Access:

Various, along Big Canyon Drive  
Newport Beach, CA

APN(s):

442-032-53  
442-032-73  
442-032-78

## SURROUNDING LAND USES AND SETTING:

Big Canyon County Club (BCCC) owns roughly 180 acres within the City of Newport Beach that is roughly bounded by Ford Road to the north; Jamboree Road on the west; San Joaquin Hills Road on the south, and MacArthur Boulevard on the east. The BCCC facilities include an 18-hole golf course that meanders through a 500-home community known as Big Canyon, as well as a driving range, chipping and putting practice facilities, a Clubhouse and parking, and fitness and swimming facilities. The BCCC golf course is also located near Harbor View Homes (residential to the east), Belcourt and One Ford Road (residential to the north), lower Big Canyon Wash Watershed (open space to the west), and North Newport Center (commercial to the south). See [Figure 1, Aerial Map](#).

## CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The Project is expected to comply with the CEQA Class 2, 15302(b) and (c) Exemption for Replacement or Reconstruction:

"Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, including but not limited to:"

(c) Replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity."

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

BCCC plans to renovate its golf course (1) to fully replace existing irrigation facilities nearing the end of their useful life with a state-of-the-art irrigation system to enable efficient, more targeted irrigation and minimize the potential of overwatering, (2) to correct areas of minor drainage deficiencies, and (3) to update the golf course while the course is closed to play during implementation of the irrigation project; refer to [Figure 2, Renovation Plan](#). The project work will avoid waters of the U.S. and State. The golf course renovation will not affect (1) the locations in which offsite drainage enters BCCC's property, (2) the amount of drainage water that enters and exits BCCC's property or (3) the location at which all drainage through BCCC exits the BCCC property. All work will take place within the footprint of the existing golf course property and the drainage from elsewhere in the watershed will continue to be conveyed above ground and in pipes through the golf course in substantially the same manner as currently occurs. The updated golf course will create more interesting playing surfaces from which golf shots must be hit (known as "lies" in golf) and update designs of fairways, roughs, sand traps, and greens, with the overall goal of enhancing the interest and playability of the golf course and utility of the practice facilities.

The project requires the cut and fill of approximately 200,000 cubic yards of soil, which will be balanced onsite. Grading will be limited to previously disturbed land and no impacts to native soil will occur. Construction and landscaping will close portions of the golf course and practice facilities on a rotating basis

over a 12-month period, including several months of grow-in periods for new grasses. The project will remove mostly ornamental, non-native trees. BCCC will replant a similar number of trees throughout the golf course after grading is complete, resulting in no overall significant loss of trees from the project. The City has no tree ordinance covering private property. The golf course renovation project will be a landscaping rehabilitation project under the City's Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 14.17), however the updated irrigation system will be exempt from the application of the Water-Efficient Code under Code Section 14.17.020 B1 because its implementation will result in water needs equal to or lower than the current golf course due to a system that will be designed, operated and programmed to comply with the City's water conservation regulations.

The new system will include U.S. EPA WaterSense Smart Automatic Irrigation Controllers, which will schedule irrigation events using either evapotranspiration (weather-based) or soil moisture data with nonvolatile memory, which is expected to reduce the amount of water necessary to irrigate the golf course below current usage.

#### A. Jurisdictional Waters

The BCCC golf course is located in the middle section of the Big Canyon Wash Watershed. Water from the upper portion of the watershed is conveyed through the golf course and drains to the lower portion of the watershed under Jamboree Road, through Big Canyon Nature Park, and ultimately into Upper Newport Bay. A jurisdictional delineation to identify the presence and limits of waters of the U.S. and State in the golf course was conducted by VCS Environmental in 2023. A Jurisdictional Memo Report dated October 14, 2024 has been submitted to the City under separate cover. As outlined in the memo, no impacts to waters of the U.S. or State will occur due to the golf course renovation.

#### B. Schedule

The renovation schedule is planned around the grow-in season for the golf course greens, which must be seeded as opposed to the fairways which will install pre-grown turf. Based on the grow-in period of several months, the golf course is expected to close August 4 of 2025 with grading and irrigation installation completed by early Spring 2026 and the golf course reopening around August 2026, depending on the weather during the grow in period.





Source: Google Earth Pro; September 2024.  
- approximate Project Boundary



VCS Environmental

BIG CANYON COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE RENOVATION  
Aerial Map

Figure 1





Source: Big Canyon Country Club; August 2023.



VCS Environmental

## BIG CANYON COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE RENOVATION Renovation Plan

Figure 2



INFORMATION DEMONSTRATING THAT THE PROJECT SATISFIES THE CONDITIONS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 15302 OF TITLE 14 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS:

1. ***Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.***

BCCC is a private, member-owned club which has operated a golf course since 1971. This renovation will maintain a golf course in its same location and footprint as it exists today, although the orientation of a few golf holes will change within that same overall footprint.

No cumulative impacts have been identified or are expected.

2. ***A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.***

The BCCC project footprint is contained within the existing golf course. There are no unusual circumstances related to this property re-use that would have a significant effect on the environment.

Because the golf course is simply being renovated, no new or unusual effects on the environment have been identified or are expected.

3. ***A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.***

The BCCC project is not located within view of a State scenic highway.

4. ***A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.***

According to TA-Group DD, LLC (TAGDD), "the State's Envirostor® Environmental online resource, which lists 'Activity and Use Limitations: (AUL) regarding environmental / hazmat issues', no BCCC property is listed on the Envirostor® website and therefore we can conclude that such property is not a site that the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Secretary of Environmental Protection have identified, pursuant to Government Code Section 65692.5, for corrective action."

The state GeoTracker® online database contains a closure summary for BCCC land adjacent to the golf course. A fuel release case (Orange County Health Care Agency #86UT21) related to former fuel tanks at the BCCC golf course maintenance facility, west of Golf Course Hole # 4, was opened in 1986, remediated through source removal, and closed by the lead agency in 2001. This area is not part of the golf course renovation project.

Additionally, the former Ford Aeronutronics facility north of Ford Road is responsible for chlorinated solvents releases that have migrated in groundwater south from the former Ford facility, across (under) Ford Road then under residential units south of Ford Road, to the northwestern portion of Hole # 4 of the BCCC golf course. The former Ford facility releases date

back decades. Ford is responsible for addressing those releases it caused. At Ford's request, BCCC allowed several monitoring wells to be installed at or next to existing Hole #4 of the golf course. Two of these wells are located within areas that the Club plans to minimally grade in connection with the renovation of Hole #4. These wells (P-16 and P-46) have measured groundwater at respective depths of (rounded) 15.3 and 10.9 feet below grade. The BCCC renovation will have a maximum cut of 2.5-feet in a relatively small area on Hole #4, which appears to be located in the general vicinity of well P-16. Nearby well P-46 appears to be in the general vicinity of cuts/fills of less than 1-foot. Therefore, due to the difference in elevation between the Ford subsurface solvents and the minor BCCC grading, no interaction between the golf course grading and the subsurface solvents is expected to occur.

**5. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.***

There are no historical structures on the site or in close proximity to the site that would be impacted by the project as all areas of impact are within the current golf course facility/built environment.

In summary, the project qualifies for a CEQA Class 2 Categorical Exemption - Section 15302: Replacement or Reconstruction.

## DETERMINATION:

I find that the answers given above are adequately supported by the information sources cited following each question and that the effects of the proposed project are typical of those generated with that class of projects (i.e., Class 2 – Replacement or Reconstruction) meeting the requirements of Section 15302 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. The proposed project will not cause a significant effect on the environment and is, therefore, categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act.



Liz Westmoreland, AICP, Principal Planner, Community Development

4-1-25

Date

## REFERENCES:

State of California. *List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways*. [https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019\\_a11y.xlsx](https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019_a11y.xlsx), accessed September 25, 2024.

State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker database review. <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, accessed August 12, 2024.

TA-Group DD, LLC letter to Jason Carriso dated September 6, 2024.

City of Newport Beach, Water Efficiency Ordinance Municipal Code Section 14.17