



**CEQA and COASTAL DETERMINATIONS
and
NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

Project: Drone Show Event by Drone Studios at Embarcadero Marina Park North
Location: 1 Embarcadero Marina Park North, San Diego, CA 92101
Parcel No.: 019-062 and 018-061
Project No.: 2025-110
Applicant: Jeff Stein, Drone Pilot, Drone Studios, 575 Sixth Ave Unit 1202; (707) 481-2586
Date: 9/19/2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for an approximately 12-minute drone show on October 17th, 2025 by Drone Studios to occur for an associated scheduled concert at the Rady Shell in San Diego, CA. The drones would be deployed from and landed at the tip of Embarcadero Marina Park North (EMPN) and displayed directly over the park and the water. The drone show would have a ceiling of 400 feet (ft) above ground level. The proposed event would have a duration of one (1) day, including set-up starting at approximately 2:00 p.m. and clean-up ending at approximately 11:00 p.m.

A temporary safety perimeter 400 feet from the edge of the drone show area would be established using cones and caution tape and enforced by event staff for an approximately 15-minute period prior to the drone show at the drone launching and landing site. Staging for the proposed event would be within the safety perimeter with an area of approximately 30 ft x 30 ft and consist of approximately 500 drones. No other closures of the walkway, road, or grass area are anticipated to occur, and the proposed event could be viewed by the public from various angles. For the duration of the drone show, the event producer will have staff assigned as visual observers. Visual observers are responsible for scanning and monitoring for any and all airborne activity, such as aircraft, failed drones, and activity involving wildlife, and reporting any relevant observations to the District. Event staff would occupy approximately 5 spaces in the nearby EMPN public parking lot. Additionally, the Applicant is required to comply with FAA regulations and obtain any applicable approvals.

The following categorical determinations are based on the project submittal and all project information known to the District as of the date of this determination.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION

Categorical Exemption: Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land (CEQA Guidelines § 15304; District Guidelines § 3.d.)

Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land (CEQA Guidelines § 15304; District Guidelines § 3.d.): Includes minor alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation not involving removal of mature, scenic trees, including, but not limited to:

- (6) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines and the Section of the District's *Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA* as identified above. This is appropriate for the proposed project because it would result in no permanent effects on the environment, and would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees. The District has determined none of the six exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to this project (CEQA Guidelines § 15300.2).

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062, a 35-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply from the date a Notice of Exemption is posted with the San Diego County Clerk, or a 180-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply if no Notice of Exemption is filed.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT

PORT MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY

Planning District: 3 - Centre City Embarcadero (Precise Plan Figure 11)

Land Use Designation: Park/Plaza

The proposed project conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because it is for a temporary drone show associated with a scheduled concert. The drone staging and deployment site would be from Embarcadero Marina Park North but due to its temporary nature, the event would not preclude the use of the site for park use and would be consistent with the existing certified land use designation. The proposed project would not change the use of the site nor would it interrupt or expand the existing conforming uses of the site.

CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION

Categorical Exclusion: Section 8.d: Minor Alterations to Land

Minor Alterations to Land (District Coastal Development Permit Guidelines § 8.d.): Minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees, including but not limited to:

- (5) Minor temporary uses of land and water having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including festivals, boating activities, parades, and running or bicycling events.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Excluded pursuant to the Section of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations* as identified above. This is appropriate for the proposed project because it would have a negligible, or no permanent, effect on the environment, nor would it involve the removal of mature, scenic trees.

Pursuant to California Coastal Act Section 30717, there is a 10-working-day period to appeal this "Coastal Act Categorical Determination of Exclusion" to the California Coastal Commission.

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE

The proposed project complies with Section 87.(a)(5) of the Port Act, which allows for the construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance, and operation of public buildings, public assembly and meeting paces, convention centers, parks, playgrounds, bathhouses and bathing facilities, recreation and fishing piers, public recreation facilities, including, but not limited to, public golf courses, and for all works, buildings, facilities, utilities, structures, and appliances incidental, necessary, or convenient for the promotion and accommodation of any of those uses. The Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed project is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.

SCOTT CHADWICK
President/CEO

Determination by:
Betsy Viramontes
Assistant Planner
Development Services

Signature: Betsy Viramontes
Date: 9/19/2025

Assistant/Deputy General Counsel

Signature: Shiraz Tangri
Date: 9/19/2025