

**CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION DETERMINATION FOR THE LEASE AGREEMENT
WITH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC DBA FRIDA CAFE**

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE CATEGORICALLY
EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

APPLICANT: City of Fresno
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

PROJECT LOCATION: 2444 Fresno Street, Fresno California 93721

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project involves the lease of approximately 771 square feet of the historic Fresno Water Tower plus non-exclusive use of outdoor courtyard and restroom facilities on the property

This project is exempt under Section 15301/Class 1 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as follows:

Under Section 15301/Class 1, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA requirements when the project consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use.

The project is exempt because the Fresno Water Tower was previously leased in 2022 through 2025 for the purposes of use as a coffee shop. The City is proposing to enter into a new agreement to continue leasing the property to Frida Cafe for the same purpose and permit minor interior alterations only necessary to support the use as a coffee shop. The minor interior alternations shall be performed in compliance with the City of Fresno Historical Preservation Ordinance and shall not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the Historic Resource. The project does not involve new construction, ground disturbance, or increased capacity beyond existing facilities and previously approved operations. Accordingly, the project will not have a significant impact on the environment, as it requires Frida Cafe to establish operations in the existing facilities.

None of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply to the project. Furthermore, the lease agreement prohibits alterations to the exterior portion of the facilities, which the Fresno Water Tower is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and as a result shall not cause substantial adverse change to the Historic Resource.

Furthermore, the proposed project is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. A categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project and the area is not environmentally sensitive.

Date: April 21, 2026

Prepared By: Brian Barr

Submitted by:



Brian Barr
Director
City of Fresno
General Services Department