



State of California  
The Natural Resources Agency  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	South Skyline Escape Route		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	37° 19' 10"N 122° 15' 5"W at center point of project	<b>COUNTY</b>	San Mateo/Santa Clara/Santa Cruz
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Andrew Hubbs, VMP Forester		
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Skyline Boulevard (CA State Highway 35) runs at the boundaries between San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. It is a winding road that follows the ridge that separates the San Lorenzo and Pescadero Creek watersheds to the west and the Stevens Creek watershed to the east. The ridgetop roadway serves multiple communities, several businesses, and many parks and open spaces. The hillsides flanking the roadway are typically steep and heavily forested, thus many sections could be impassable in the event of a wildfire. Vegetation management along Skyline is a priority in both Community Wildfire Protection Plans that cover the Skyline corridor. Past roadside vegetation management projects have occurred in most sections of Skyline, most recently in 2012 and 2015-16.

The vegetation in the project area is predominantly mixed evergreen forest, dominated by Douglas-fir, bay laurel, oak and madrone. The understory includes grasses, weeds, vines, ferns and small understory plants such as hazelnut, buckeye, coffeeberry and tan-oak. There are numerous very large exotic broom infestations and a small amount of shrubland consisting of mixed native brush dominated by coyote brush or chamise/manzanita.

Goals for this roadside vegetation management project:

- 1) Reduce the likelihood of high fire intensity in the roadway: Maintain and improve the Skyline Boulevard evacuation route through hazardous fuel reduction up to 50' from the road centerline on both sides.
- 2) Reduce fuel density and continuity near the roadway: Develop separation vertically and horizontally between potentially flammable vegetation by trimming woody vegetation, limbing-up ladder fuels and removing accumulated dead fuel build up along the roadway.
- 3) Educate the property owners as to what they can do on their own properties to make living in the wildland interface a little safer.
- 4) Ensure that Skyline corridor retains a natural character and supports biodiversity by leaving small islands of native understory vegetation in a manner consistent with the other vegetation management goals.
- 5) Efficient use of funds. Handwork will be the primary method of fuel reduction. Mastication and/or flail mowers may potentially be considered in non-forested roadside areas. However, the equipment allowed on this project will remain on the paved roadway, road shoulders, established turnouts and NOT on the soil. The cutting heads/blades will be set at least 6" from grade to avoid all soil disturbance.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

### REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Review by Tim Morin, RPF #2505, confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The RPF has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the RPF is kept on file at CAL FIRE's Felton office.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

*Matthew Reischman*

8/17/2020

Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection