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NOTICE OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

Deva Marie Proto, County Clerk

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

BY: *BSP*

(707) 565-1900

Fax (707) 565-1103

Betsy Penn, Deputy Clerk

Sonoma County proposes to carry out the following project. Pursuant to Section 23A-11 of the Sonoma County Code, it has been determined that this project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

Project Title: 2020 Northwest Hazard Tree and Vegetation Removal Project (Project No. M21901)

Lead Agency / County Agency of Filing: Sonoma County

Project Proponent (Applicant): Department of Transportation and Public Works

Applicant Address: 2300 County Center Drive, Suite B100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Project Location: Portions of Fort Ross Road, Old Cazadero Road, Rio Nido Road, Hauser Bridge Road, King Ridge Road, Seaview Road, and Timber Cove Road

Date of Approval: October 20th, 2020

Exemption Filed With: County Clerk

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works proposes to conduct grant-funded fuel reduction work along 30 miles of road segments in northwest Sonoma County. All of the work is proposed to take place within the public road right-of-way along Fort Ross Road, Hauser Bridge Road, King Ridge Road, Old Cazadero Road, Rio Nido Road, Seaview Road, and Timber Cove Road. Fuel reduction work will encompass the removal or pruning of 1,498 dead, dying, or hazardous trees identified by an arborist or Registered Professional Forester. Hazardous trees were identified as trees that posed a threat to public safety from either structural, tree health, Sudden Oak Death (SOD) infection or fire safe issues. The trees identified for removal or pruning range in size from 5" – 80" diameter at breast height (DBH). The species proposed for removal include *Acer macrophyllum*, *Alnus spp*, *Arbutus menziesii*, *Castanea spp*, *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Notholithocarpus denisiflorus*, *Pinus ponderosa*, *Pinus radiata*, *Psuedotsuga mezesii*, *Quercus agrifolia*, *Quercus chrysolepis*, *Quercus kelloggii*, *Sequoia sempervirens*, and *Umbellularia californica*. The project grant also entails understory fuel reduction that will occur to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation within the road right-of-way along the same selected road segments. Vegetation and trees to be removed will be cut at grade, with stumps remaining in place. Vegetation removal will occur using mechanical methods, via heavy equipment and handcrews with chainsaws. Heavy equipment will remain along the road prism, and no ground disturbing activities will occur. All work will occur from the roadside and no access to private property will be required. Slash and debris will be disposed of onsite via mulching or lop and scatter. Work will not occur in areas of special status species, critical habitat, wetlands, riparian corridors, sensitive natural communities or other sensitive resources.

REASON WHY THIS PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections, Section 15301 (c) Maintenance of existing highways and streets and 15304 (i) Minor Alteration to Land - Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. The removal of the dead, dying and hazardous trees is a maintenance activity of an existing public facility involving no expansion of use. The understory fuel reduction is a minor alteration to land that involves fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures.

This Notice of Exemption is filed pursuant to the provisions of Section 15062 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Project Proponent:

Hunter McLaughlin

Hunter McLaughlin
Junior Engineer
Transportation and Public Works
Traffic Engineering & Land Development
(707) 565-1757

Lead Agency Contact:

Robert C. Aguero

Robert Aguero
Senior Environmental Specialist
Permit Sonoma
Natural Resources
(707) 565-3718

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE