



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Los Banos Road Grading		
PROJECT LOCATION	Sec. 26, 34, 35 T10S, R08E. Sec. 31 T10S, R09E. Sec. 25, 26, 35 T11S, R07E. Sec. 1, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32 T11S, R08E. Sec. 6, 36 T11S, R09E. Sec. 30, 31 T11S, R10E. Sec. 2 T12S, R07E. Sec. 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 T12S, R08E. Sec. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35 T12S, R09E. Sec. 2, 4, 5, 8 T13S, R09E.	COUNTY	Merced
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit		
CONTACT	Brian Mattos, Unit Forester		
ADDRESS	Sebastien Cordier, Environmental Scientist 5366 Highway 49 North Mariposa, CA 95338	PHONE	(559) 706-8807 (559) 706-8808

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is proposing a road grading project southwest of Los Banos in Merced County. Approximately 45 miles (~106 acres) of pre-existing dirt roads will be maintained every winter with a rubber-tired road grader vehicle. This will maintain the dirt roads that provide access to ~157,000 acres of SRA. The dirt roads traverse rural ranch and agricultural rangeland settings, with annual and perennial grasses, forbs, shrubs, oak woodland, and riparian woodland communities. Such as rabbitbrush, bush lupine, valley oak, blue oak, coast live oak, gray pine, buckeye, sycamore, and willow species. Most of the rangelands are used for cattle grazing by local ranchers. This road has been improved in the past, with imported road base soil and rocking along portions. Ditch lines and drains within the existing road prism will also be maintained. No new roads will be constructed, only grading the previous extent. Elevations range from 498' to 2,294' above sea level.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 1, §15304(c): Existing Facilities
- 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

This project fits under portions of Class 1, §15304(c): Existing Facilities Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Class 1 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. Under section (c), this includes existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (including road grading for the purpose of public safety).

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland or timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, 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 or traffic, utilities and service systems or wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mariposa Headquarters at 5366 State Highway 49 North, Mariposa CA 95338.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

John Melvin

2/16/2022

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection