



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	West Side Fuelbreak		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	T22S, R8E, Sec 1, 2, 3, 10 - 15, 23, 24, 26, 35, 36; T22S, R9E, Sec 13, 18, 19, 20, 23 - 31, 33; T23S, R8E, Sec 1; T23S, R9E, Sec 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27; MDBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	Monterey
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Timothy Montgomery CAL FIRE San Benito - Monterey Unit 2221 Garden Road		
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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The West Side Fuelbreak is located in southern Monterey County 5 miles west of HWY 101 and 15 miles southwest of King City, CA. Ownership of West Side Fuelbreak is comprised of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private land. The fuelbreak was constructed approximately 70 years ago using a bulldozer with a ball and chain to remove vegetation. Project activities consist of maintaining/reconstructing the fuelbreak on either side of private ranch roads, county roads and on ridges at a width of 100 to 200 feet, and will result in treatment of approximately 1,380 acres. The project will involve the maintenance of an existing fuelbreak that will be used to slow and/or contain a wildfire in the area. The fuelbreak will provide protection to residential structures, natural resources, and critical communications infrastructure. The treatment will primarily consist of utilizing mechanized equipment to reduce fuel loading through mastication. Bulldozers may be used in areas within particularly thick and dense vegetation but will not be the primary fuels reduction method. Hand crews will be utilized in sensitive areas where equipment is excluded and for thinning operations. Areas treated by hand crews will be piled and burned; a burn permit will be attained prior to burning. In some cases, roads within the fuelbreak may be graded to maintain access for emergency vehicles. Grading will occur within the fuel break and the existing road prism.

Vegetation profiles include forbs, grass/oak woodlands (including Oak Savanna assemblages) in the lower elevations, with chaparral and pine on the slopes towards the peaks. There are large portions of windthrown knobcone pines and decadent chamise on the slopes of the project area. Fuel loading is considerably high and contiguous on the mountain and canyon slopes. The elevation ranges from approximately 800ft to 2,780 ft. Topography in the area is characterized by moderately steep slopes near ridges and gently sloped foothills with swales. Most of the project work will take place on ridgelines.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

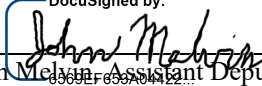
- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4 15304, Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section): Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

### REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under portions of 14 CCR §15304 Minor Alterations to Land. After consulting with responsible agencies, conducting archaeological and biological research and implementing archeological and biological surveys, the Department has determined this project will have no significant impact on the environment. 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, 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, energy, wildfire, transportation or traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE BEU Headquarters in Monterey.

CAL FIRE will provide funding or staffing for maintenance activities described above on 641 acres of federal lands that have been analyzed under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The California Environmental Quality Act does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. All West Side Fuelbreak project activities are included in the Westside Fuelbreak, San Ardo Grade Fuelbreak and Lockwood Grade Fuelbreak #DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0011 signed in 2019.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:  
  
John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date 6/20/2022  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection