



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Highway 35 Evacuation Route Shaded Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	Skylonda, King's Mountain	COUNTY	San Mateo
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is in the highway right-of-way of a 25-mile section of Highway 35 in unincorporated San Mateo County, CA. The project area begins at Alpine Road on the south end and ends at the junction of Highway 35 and 92 on the north end. The right of way on either side of the highway is approximately 30 feet wide and all of the fuel reduction work would be performed in this 30-foot-wide area on both sides of the highway. The project is a total of 369 acres.

The proposed work involves the removal of understory woody shrubs, invasive plants (brooms), and some limited tree removal (dead trees, diseased trees with no hope of recovery, and hazardous trees). In forested areas overstory trees will be trimmed to create adequate vertical clearance between surface vegetation and the lower portions of tree crowns. Tree trimming will also be performed to create horizontal clearance between the tree crowns on either side of the highways. Herbicides are being proposed for use, specifically spot treatments for invasive species that aggressively resprout after cutting (broom, acacia, eucalyptus).

The proposed fuel reduction work will be performed by a combination of hand crews working on the understory vegetation on the sections of right-of-way with slopes less than 20%, an excavator with a boom arm and a masticator attachment working on the understory vegetation of the sections of the right-of-way with slopes greater than 20%, and tree trimmers working in forestry bucket trucks performing the overhead tree trimming work on the trees overhanging the highway. Vehicles and equipment would work from the pavement and only hand crews would walk on the slopes in the right-of-way. Cut material will be chipped or masticated and spread back on to the right-of-way.

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

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

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, wildfire, energy, transportation or traffic, or to utilities and service systems.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

 John Melvin, Deputy Director Date 2/11/2023
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection