NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE	Highway 84 Roadside Shaded Fuel Break

PROJECT LOCATION	San Mateo County, CA	**COUNTY**	San Mateo

LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CONTACT **ADDRESS**	Sarah Collamer, Forester #2983 6059 HW 9 Felton, CA 95018	**PHONE**	(831)254-1792

This project proposes to perform hazardous fuel reduction activities in the right of way on both sides of an approximately 8-mile-long east to west running segment of Highway 84 in San Mateo county. The project area begins at the junction of Highway 84 and 35 on the east end and ends at the junction of Sylvan Way and Highway 84 at the west end of the project. Highway 84 and the project area generally parallel the La Honda and San Gregorio Creeks. Except for the locations where the highway crosses the creek, the project area is on average more than 100 feet from either creek bed.

The right of way on either side of both highways 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 proposed work involves the removal of understory woody shrubs, invasive plants (brooms), and small 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. There is some tree removal being proposed, this is limited to dead/dying trees or trees that have a high likelihood of falling into the highway. 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.

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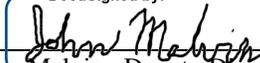
John Melvin

John Melvin, Deputy Director   2/11/2023

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection   Date