



COUNTY OF LAKE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division
Courthouse - 255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Telephone 707/263-2221 FAX 707/263-2225

2024-041

FILED

May 9, 2024
JENAVIVE HERRINGTON
COUNTY CLERK
LAKE COUNTY

By KA
Deputy clerk

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: County Clerk Office of Planning & Research
County of Lake 1400 Tenth Street
Lakeport, CA 95453 Sacramento, CA 95814-3044

FROM: Lake County Community Development Dept.
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

PROJECT TITLE: GI Landfill Corrective Action Plan Phase 1 (Categorical Exemption CE 24-11)

PROJECT LOCATION: 19020 Butts Canyon Road, Middletown 95461 (APN 014-004-01)

COUNTY: Lake

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) is proposing grading activities in conformance with a new Corrective Action Plan that modifies a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) for post-closure maintenance and corrective action at the former 92-acre Geothermal Inc. Landfill facility, currently owned and managed by PG&E.

The Corrective Action Plan will occur in two phases. The County of Lake Community Development Department will act as Lead Agency under CEQA for Phase 1 of this Corrective Action Plan.

Phase 1 grading activities would trigger a Standard Grading Permit and are estimated to take up to four months to complete and include the following:

- 1) Removal of the existing eucalyptus and poplar trees by felling the trees and removing the root balls. Tree removal via the root system is considered a clearing activity under County of Lake Municipal Code Chapter 30, and grading permit type can be triggered by the amount of clearing within soil with an erosion hazard rating defined as "Slight" "Moderate" or "Severe". 4,379 cubic yards of clearing will occur within soil type 180 Mocho variant loam (Slight), 102 cubic yards of clearing will occur in 144 Jafa loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes (Slight), and 319 cubic yards of clearing will occur within 116 Benridge variant loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes (Moderate). Reasoning for the removal include inadequacy of the eucalyptus plantations in depressing groundwater or remediating groundwater to the extent anticipated back in 2006 when the use of the trees for remedial action was first proposed. In addition, the eucalyptus and poplar trees present an ongoing and unnecessary fire risk.
- 2) The removal and disposal of all above ground irrigation line components within the plantation (i.e., drip irrigation hoses and emitters) would be performed in advance to avoid

interference with the tree removal activities. Removal would require the following grading activities:

- a. Excavation of material not greater than ten (10) feet from original grade.
 - b. Cut or fill of a ratio will be maintained at approximately a 1:1 ratio.
 - c. Fill depth of approximately one and a quarter (1.25) feet or less.
- 3) Following tree removal activities, the plantation blocks will be re-graded to drain away from the landfill waste mass or into engineered drainage features that will prevent percolation adjacent to the landfill. Plantation blocks will be roughly graded to match surrounding topography and existing drainage swales.
 - 4) Overall, 4,800 cubic yards of soil will be cut and filled for a net-zero soil mass balance (i.e, no fill material will be imported and no native soils will be exported). Soil will not be stockpiled on site and will be smoothed out to fill where trees are removed. However, wood chips will be stockpiled along the road as the trees are mulched, which will then be picked up and hauled offsite for disposal.
 - 5) The project area will be accessed using existing access roads from Butts Canyon Road. Equipment will stay on site throughout the duration of project activities to reduce the tracking of sediment onto nearby roadways.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Lake County Community Development Department

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: ERM Consulting

EXEMPT STATUS (Check One):

- Ministerial [Section 21080(b); 15268];
- Declared Emergency [Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)];
- Emergency Project [Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)];
- Statutory Exemption: State code number: _____;
- Categorical Exemption (15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines)
- General Rule [Section 15061(b)(3)]

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15301, Class 1(h), Existing Facilities will be applied to the proposed project. This exemption 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. Subsection (h) provides for the maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs.

The project is located within an existing facility (i.e. the former Geothermal Landfill) and proposes no expansion of use. The removal of the trees, irrigation lines and components are considered maintenance activities pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 27 which requires dischargers to take corrective actions to address compliance issues including ongoing violations

and water quality impacts caused by historical operations on the site. The tree plantation of eucalyptus and poplar tree species was established in 2004 as part of a Cleanup and Abatement Order issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) and maintained as part of a Corrective Action Plan approved by the CVRWQCB on March 12, 2024. The express purpose of the tree plantation was to lower groundwater levels below the Geothermal landfill. The tree plantation has demonstrated to not achieve this goal, and no longer serves a purpose. The existence of the tree plantation presents an increased risk for wildfire to the local community as eucalyptus, a non-native species, are highly flammable. Removal of the tree plantation is consistent with ongoing closed-site maintenance activities, in conformance with environmental protection requirements pursuant to monitoring, reporting and compliance agreements for ongoing closed site maintenance.

CONTACT PERSON: Katherine Schaefer **TELEPHONE NUMBER: 707-263-2221**

Signature:



Date: May 9, 2024

Title: Resource Planner

