



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Highway 101 Fuel Reduction		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	T17N; R13W; Secs 8, 9, 16, 21, 22, 26-28, 35, 36 T16N; R13W; Sec 1 T16N; R12W; Secs 6-8, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 29, 32, 33 T15N; R12W; Secs 5, 8, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 33 T14N; R12W; Secs 4, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23; MDB&M	<b>COUNTY</b>	Mendocino
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Julie Rhoads VMP Forester I		
<b>ADDRESS</b>	802 North Main Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437	<b>PHONE</b>	707-671-3357

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is a collaboration between CAL FIRE and Caltrans with the objective of reducing hazardous fuel profiles within the wildland urban interface along 24.1 miles of the Highway 101 transportation corridor between postmile 17.2 (just south of the City of Ukiah near Nelson Ranch Road), and postmile 41.3 at the top of Ridgewood Grade (just south of the City of Willits), in Mendocino County. This 917-acre project will reduce the risk of human-caused ignitions, reduce non-native and invasive plant species, improve habitat for native California plant species, and generally increase resilience to future wildfire disturbance events within the Caltrans Highway 101 right-of-way (ROW). This project proposes to use prescribed fire to reduce vegetation biomass in the project area, particularly the amount of fine fuels and ladder fuels. Preparatory work may be done with hand tools. Work will occur along the Highway 101 shoulder, along the center median, around on and off ramps (including cloverleaves), around turnouts, and other areas within the Caltrans ROW. The project will be implemented and managed by CAL FIRE. Existing interstate/roadways and containment lines will be utilized in combination with wet lines. Containment lines may need to be reestablished or maintained in some places using hand crews. Burning will be performed during the evenings and early mornings to limit potential daytime impacts to the local community and to vehicle traffic on Highway 101. Work is anticipated to begin in mid-June, depending on vegetation curing rates and environmental conditions. Caltrans and CAL FIRE plan to conduct annual prescribed burn treatments in the Caltrans ROW.

### 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 project meets the requirements of a CEQA Article 19 Class 4 Categorical exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" (Section 15304, Public Resources Code) as the proposed fuel management activities entail understory brush removal, 10 "DBH or less tree removal, thinning, pruning, chipping, from an existing roadway, and dead/tree removal to improve access for fire engines and reduce volume of flammable vegetation. CAL FIRE has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/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/traffic, utilities, and service systems, or to wildfire. No exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit, 802 N. Main Street. Attn. VMP Coordinator.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

6/10/2024

George Morris III, Northern Region Chief Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection