



Yana Garcia
Secretary for
Environmental Protection



Department of Toxic Substances Control

Katherine M. Butler, MPH, Director
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Gavin Newsom
Governor

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 7, 2025

Steve Garcia
Forester II
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
13760 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603
Steven.Garcia@fire.ca.gov

RE: MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR NORTH FORK AMERICAN RIVER
SHADED FUEL BREAK PROJECT DATED APRIL 11, 2025, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE
NUMBER [2025040655](#)

Dear Steve Garcia,

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break Project (Project). The California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is proposing to install a shaded fuel break by modifying natural vegetation along a swath of land between Interstate 80 and the North Fork of the American River in Placer County. The proposed Project is in Placer County between the communities of Auburn and Colfax. The Project covers 6,051 acres along strategically selected parcels between the North Fork of the American River and Interstate 80.

There are several areas wherein DTSC has regulatory oversight near or within the proposed Project site, whether they are listed as having documented contamination, land use restrictions, mining operations, subject to a Hazardous Waste Facility Permit, or the potential for the Project site to be included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962. The [Bunch](#)

[Creek](#) and [Ellsworth MacFadden Property](#) sites located in Colfax, California, have been recognized as DTSC sites. Given the size of the proposed Project, there may be additional sites, mining or other environmental-related issues present and possibly impacted.

DTSC received an oversight application for the [Bunch Creek](#) (Site) in 2009 to provide a NFA letter or equivalent for a proposed rezoning plan. Environmental documents received as part of the application identified former mining features at the Site and preliminary sampling identified metals above health-based screening levels. An agreement was never finalized, and no work has been completed under DTSC oversight to indicate these issues have been adequately addressed. The [EnviroStor Profile](#) for this Site has been updated to include the previous environmental reports, associated APNs, and plot to the correct location.

The [Ellsworth MacFadden Property](#) has documentation from Placer County Environmental Health (PCEH) stating the site has naturally occurring asbestos and elevated arsenic concentrations. According to a 2008 Site Screening Assessment, PCEH issued a No Further Action (NFA) letter in 2000 for cleanup of lead contaminated soil at this site from vehicle batteries and it does not appear any additional evaluations have been conducted since.

DTSC recommends and requests consideration of the following comments:

1. The aforementioned sites lie within the proposed Project boundaries so there is potential for historic mining activities. As such, a State of California environmental regulatory agency such as DTSC, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), or a local agency that meets the requirements of [Health and Safety Code section 101480](#) should provide regulatory concurrence that project is safe for construction and the proposed use. Please visit the DTSC [Abandoned Mine Lands webpage](#) for reference or further guidance.
2. DTSC recommends that all imported soil and fill material should be tested to assess any contaminants of concern meet screening levels as outlined in [DTSC's Preliminary Endangerment Assessment Guidance Manual](#).

Additionally, DTSC advises referencing the [DTSC Information Advisory Clean Imported Fill Material Fact Sheet](#) if importing fill is necessary. To minimize the possibility of introducing contaminated soil and fill material there should be documentation of the origins of the soil or fill material and, if applicable, sampling be conducted to ensure that the imported soil and fill material are suitable for the intended land use. The soil sampling should include analysis based on the source of the fill and knowledge of prior land use. Additional information can be found by visiting [DTSC's Human and Ecological Risk Office \(HERO\) webpage](#).

DTSC would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the MND for the North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break Project. Thank you for your assistance in protecting California's people and environment from the harmful effects of toxic substances. If you have any questions or would like clarification on DTSC's comments, please respond to this letter or via our [CEQA Review email](#) for additional guidance.

Sincerely,



Dave Kereazis
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Steve Garcia
May 7, 2025
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cc: (via email)

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