

# Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To:  Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tulare County Clerk  
Room 105, Courthouse  
221 South Mooney Boulevard  
Visalia, California 93291



Date filed with the Tulare County Clerk

Lead Agency: Tulare County Resource Management Agency  
5961 South Mooney Blvd.  
Visalia, Ca 93277

*hguerra@tularecounty.ca.gov*  
*jwillis@tularecounty.ca.gov*

Applicant(s): Tulare County Fire Department  
835 S. Akers St  
Visalia, CA 93277

Ph: 559-802-9800

Project Title: CAL FIRE California Climate Investment Grant North Fork Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project 5GG20180  
Project Location - Specific: Unincorporated community of Three Rivers in Tulare County, CA,  
Project Location- Section, Township, Range: See Project Location Map, Attachment "A", incorporated herein by reference  
Project Location - City: N/A Project Location - County: Tulare

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** The California Climate Investment (CCI) Grant provides funding for projects related to the removal of dead or dying trees, hazardous fuel (vegetation) reduction, fire prevention education, and fire prevention planning. Reducing fuel along a vital evacuation route allows for the safe ingress or egress of civilians and first responders during a fast moving wildland fire. In addition to securing a vital evacuation route, the reduction of available vegetation will also reduce the wildfire threat to habitable structures within Tulare County and the State Responsibility Area (SRA). The Tulare County Fire Department intends to conduct fuel reduction activities including: physically removing or chipping vegetation along North Fork Drive adjacent to the community of Three Rivers.

The entirety of this project is located in the high fire severity zone. This project will reduce vegetation and fuel located within 40 feet on either side of the roadway, creating an approximately 110 feet wide area and securing the only evacuation route. The overriding goal is to reduce the spread of wildland fire from North Fork Drive into the wildland/urban interface, and vice versa. The evacuation route addressed in this project is identified in the Tulare County Community Evacuation Plan as the only route of travel for inhabited structures in the area.

The public benefit of projects funded by CCI include reducing the risk of fire ignition and spreading, and adjacent to communities; educating owners of habitable structures about wildfire risks; allowing for strategic, long-term planning to reduce the risk of wildfire to communities in the SRA throughout the State; or removing dead or dying trees that pose a threat to public health and safety.

**Exempt Status: (check one)**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(c));
- General Rule: CEQA guidelines 15061 (b)(3)
- Categorical Exemption:
- Statutory Exemptions:

**Reasons why project/activity is exempt:** The proposed project is excluded or exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on the grounds that the project is consistent with the following:

Public Resources Code Section 21080, subdivision (b) (4) (Emergency), and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, subdivision (c) (Emergency).

The County was successful in receiving \$389,371 as requested in the grant application. This will be used to address the risk and potential of wildfire impacts on North Fork Drive that pose a threat to public health and safety within the SRA in the unincorporated

communities of Three Rivers and North Fork Drive.

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15359, an "Emergency" applies when a project is necessary "...to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to life, health, property or essential public services." As such, preventive efforts would be undertaken to remove dead or dying trees to protect essential public services (such as accessible roads) prior to the occurrence of catastrophic wildfire.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Tulare, Resource Management Agency

Project Planner/Representative: Division Chief Jeff McLaughlin Area Code/Telephone: 559-731-8681

Signature:  Date: 12/14/21 Title: Chief Environmental Planner  
Hector Guerra

Signature:  Date: 12.14.21 Title: Environmental Assessment Officer  
for Reed Schenke P.E. RMA Director

Baron Bock

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR: N/A

Signed by Applicant