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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE:	Seniors and Disabled Defensible Space Program, Mountain Ranch Area		
PROJECT LOCATION	T4N, R13E, Sections 3 and 4; T5N, R13E, Sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34 & 35; MDBM	**COUNTY**	Calaveras
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Roger Petersen, Unit Forester CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit		
ADDRESS	785 Mountain Ranch Rd., San Andreas, CA 95249	**PHONE**	(209) 754-3831

Project Description: The project will assist elderly and disabled residents of the county create defensible space within 100-feet of their residence, or to the property line, whichever is closer. This project will consist of removing brush, trees less than 12-inches diameter at breast height, and surface fuels to reduce flammable vegetation in the area surrounding residences. Dead trees of any size may be felled by hand and either left on site for the landowner or hauled to a local green waste facility. Operations will consist of contractors using hand tools to cut brush and small trees, prune trees, rake leaves and pine needles, trim weeds to less than 4-inches in height after the grass has cured; and chipping cut vegetation. Vehicles and chippers will only work from existing roads and driveways. Cut, trimmed, pruned material may be removed from the site and hauled to a green waste facility. The intent of the project is to eliminate the vertical and horizontal continuity of understory fuels and surface fuels to reduce potential fire danger and help elderly and disabled residents of the county comply with the requirements of Public Resources Code 4291.

The community of Mountain Ranch has been selected as the project area. The project area is approximately 3,582 acres in size. The goal is to reduce hazardous fuels around 100 residences. The area of treatment around any given residence could be up to 100-feet from the residence, or roughly 40,000 square feet (less than 1 acre) per residence. Actual work is expected to occur on less than 100-acres within the project area.

The reduction of vegetation around residences will comply with the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and is expected to minimize fire behavior in the event of a fire.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type and 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

This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. The project will consist of removing surface and ladder fuels to create defensible space around the residences of seniors and disabled citizens. The project is located in an urban interface area. The project is minor in scope and will be limited to the area within 100-feet of individual residences, or to the property line, whichever is closer. The project will not involve the removal of mature or scenic trees. Sensitive species will not be impacted by the proposed project. The project was designed to avoid adverse impacts to watercourses. The project will not impact archaeological resources. The project was designed to help seniors and disabled residents comply with the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and will make Calaveras County more resilient regarding wildfires.

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/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, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Headquarters in San Andreas.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:
Mike Van Loben Sels
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8/5/2025

Mike Van Loben Sels, Southern Region Chief Date:
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection