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Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm. 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005

Project Title: Eucalyptus Removal Restoration Project at Morro Dunes Ecological Reserve (Project)

Project Location: The Project will take place in San Luis Obispo County within the Pecho Unit of the Morro Dunes Ecological Reserve (MDER), which is owned and managed by CDFW. The treatment area encompasses approximately 0.84 acres of eucalyptus removal and habitat restoration within a 2.75-acre work area centered at approximately 35.30161° N, 120.86208° W.

Project Description: CDFW is issuing a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (a) to the County of San Luis Obispo (Permit No. 2081(a)-25-016-RP) for a project to remove invasive eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and restore approximately 0.84 acres of occupied Morro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*) habitat that has been degraded by dense tree growth and accumulated biomass. The objective of the Project is to restore native chaparral habitat, promote long-term persistence of Morro manzanita, and reduce wildfire risk within the Pecho Unit and surrounding reserve lands. Approximately 28 mature eucalyptus trees and associated saplings and stumps across a 2.75-acre work area will be felled and removed using low-impact forestry equipment. Two non-native pine trees may also be removed. Felled material will be chipped, hauled off-site, or, if conditions allow, disposed of through controlled pile burning in coordination with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Morro manzanita individuals will be protected and avoided to the greatest extent feasible through pre-activity biological surveys, flagging of plants, and establishment of no-disturbance buffers around occupied areas. Erosion control measures such as coir logs will be installed to stabilize any disturbed soils, and invasive species management will target eucalyptus resprouts and perennial veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) using targeted herbicide application that will be applied quarterly if necessary. Following tree removal activities, the site will rely primarily on passive revegetation from the existing Morro manzanita seed bank and adjacent native stands.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Planning and Building

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Ministerial;
- ☐ Declared Emergency;
- ☐ Emergency Project;
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of small-scale habitat restoration activities on less than five acres to eradicate invasive eucalyptus and restore maritime chaparral habitat for the benefit of Morro manzanita, a state-listed candidate species. All work will occur under CDFW supervision and includes measures to protect sensitive species, prevent erosion, and avoid significant adverse environmental effects. The Project will improve habitat quality and ecological function of the Pecho Unit and surrounding Ecological Reserve lands.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Debaki Sarkar Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (559) 580-3201

Signature: DocuSigned by: Julie Vance FA83F09FE08945A... **Date:** 10/30/2025

Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager, Central Region

☐ Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____