

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County
1750 E. 4th Street, Suite 100
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Project Title: Ortega Highway Cleveland National Forest SCRIP Fuels Management

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

Project Location - Specific: State Route 74 – Cleveland National Forest

Project Location - City: N/A Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

Caltrans District 12 proposes to conduct vegetation fuel reduction treatments, including vegetation management strip vegetation clearance, invasive flashy fuel removal, and vegetation thinning along Ortega Highway within Cleveland National Forest to reduce fire risks and promote native plant resiliency.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

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(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: PRC 4799.05 (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resource Cod, Section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA, projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under USFS NEPA Finding of Applicability and No Extraordinary Circumstance (04.14.2026)

Lead Agency Contact Person: Smita Deshpande

Phone number: 949-279-8704

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?

Yes No

Signature:  Date: 4/22/26 Title: Branch Chief

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.